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Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[For information on the Molimo and Elima religious associations, see category 575.]

[ARCHERS]

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INITIATION

Schebesta (1948, 467 ff.; 1952, 265 ff.) gives no information concerning the initiation of girls among the archers. He does, however, describe at some length the initiation, accompanied by circumcision, of boys, according to the villager rite known as *nkumbi*. His earlier account, in "Die Bambuti Pygmäen vom Ituri," is, by his own admission, drawn largely from Mbuti and villager informants throughout the forest. He was able to have only fleeting glimpses (*"flüchtigen Einblicke"*; Schebesta, 1948, 475) of parts of *nkumbi* festivals among the Ngwana, Byeru, Bali, and forest Bira, but his observations, he says, confirmed what he had been told. In 1949 he had an opportunity to see more of a single *nkumbi*, details of which he records (Schebesta, 1952), but this was among net-hunting Mbuti. Consequently, we lack precise information concerning the *nkumbi* among archers. Opinion among different groups of Mbuti varies as to the origin of the custom; some claim to have practiced it before the villagers, some say that they have adopted it only recently. There are

[P 179-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

[P. 179-C]

even Mbuti groups in which apparently it is practiced among themselves but without circumcision. 881 177

The *nkumbi* takes place approximately every six years, says Schebesta, and each initiation has a specific name, usually connected with some outstanding incident connected with that particular occasion. It is inaugurated on the decision of the village lineage head who invites the Mbuti to take part. An essential feature of the *nkumbi* throughout the Ituri is this joint participation of Mbuti and villager. [613]

The *nkumbi* (Efe: *leku*) takes place in a special camp in the forest, some distance from the village. A large conical hut is built (Schebesta, 1948, here follows a description of a southern Lese initiation), on one side of which is the raised sleeping place of the initiates (Efe: *bemu*), and on the other, the fireplace and quarters of the elders who will guard and teach the boys. All the arrangements are in the hands of the villager lineage head (*avitiri*).

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

The candidates, Mbuti and villager, are led before the operator and are, if brave enough, circumcised standing up; otherwise, they are laid on the ground and held down. Next to every Lese youth stands a Pygmy boy, who is circumcised immediately after him. The two enter into a lasting bond of *karé* brotherhood. As the circumcision is completed, the Lese blows his signal horn, and the Mbuti his *segbe* pipe. The women in the village hear this and reply with a shout of joy at this sign that their sons have now become men. By this joint ceremony the *karé* stand in an even closer relationship to each other than do blood brothers.

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Schebesta gives little account of the ensuing instruction, though he mentions the brutality with which he says the initiates are treated in the camp. Food is brought by the mothers and left nearby; the elders from the camp go to collect it. The boys are cut off from any comfort they might be given by their mothers. Instruction, "partly social, partly moral" (Schebesta, 1948, 481) may be given by the lineage head himself or by one of the other elders.

The major aspects of the *nkumbi*, from Schebesta's account, seem to be the formal transition from boyhood to manhood, the establishment of a *karé* relationship between Mbuti and villagers, and the introduction of all the initiates for the first time to a special trumpet that plays an important part in the men's secret

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[P. 179-D]

[ARCHERS]

P [P. 180-A]
Z society. Schebesta also mentions other instru-
881 ments particularly associated with *nkumbi* (and
177 the secret society) among the south Lese,
608 namely: the bull-roarer (*pahudjuhudju* or
534 *hudjuhudju*); a flute (*likuru*); a singing pot
(*pengi*); and the large wooden trumpet (*asa-*
Z *ragba*). The invitation to the Mbuti to take part
[563] in the *nkumbi* is one of the ways in which the
villagers seek to maintain and extend their
control over the Pygmies.

Z Schebesta concludes that we must distinguish
P two elements in the *nkumbi*: the villager ele-
881 ment of initiation associated with circumcision
177 and, quite distinct from it, the Pygmy element
P of initiation into the men's secret society (*torè*).
[576]

MARRIAGE

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581 Schebesta (1948, 343) writes that it is difficult
584 to determine which is the stronger, the interests
621 of the hunting band or the interests and mutual
affection of the two individuals concerned.

[ARCHERS]

P Z 575 562 The society plays a part in social life by chastizing rebels, particularly women (Schebesta, 1948). All whom Schebesta (1937) questioned assured him that the primary object of the society was to keep the women in their place, mainly by stealing food from them for the society to feast upon. P Z [178] It is perhaps also worth mentioning that Schebesta (1937, 101) writes: "Nowadays in the main a *toré* meeting place is just a home for hen-pecked husbands. . . . It has no connection in any way with the ceremonial of tribal initiation."

P Z 575 881 177 114 He modified these views in his later work (Schebesta, 1948, 492 ff.) but used the same evidence. He finds a definite connection between the *toré* society and the *nkumbi* "circumcision initiation." The latter, he says, is founded on the same belief in *toré* but has taken a villager form. Circumcision above all is a villager custom and has nothing to do with Mbuti initiation. Originally, the Mbuti knew only the association of *toré*, which integrated the young men into the adult group of *toré* hunters.

P Z 575 182 [562] As far as can be seen from this material, the *toré* society has both social and magico-religious functions. Its primary social function is the control of the womenfolk of any one Mbuti band (who, it will be remembered, come from varied bands and do not have the same communal feeling as the menfolk). P 575 Schebesta mentions the fact that, when a meeting of the Mbuti *toré*

[P. 184-B]

[ARCHERS]

Costermans further agrees with Junker P
(1889–1891, vol. 3, 92) that many of the 622
northern archers have recently themselves 184
taken to a system of chieftainship. They lead 178
their nomadic existence under the jurisdiction 621
of a chief and in every way preserve their
freedom under this jurisdiction. If there is any
disagreement, however, they leave and place
themselves under a neighboring chief. But not
nearly enough information is given for any
understanding of the structure of this "system."

Schebesta seems to stand between the two P 2
extremes with regard to the archers whom he 439
studied. He stresses the economic dependency 177
of the Mbuti on the villagers, and also, as does 571
Putnam (1948), the personal aspect of the relationship. [114]
He does not agree with Costermans
that the archers change their allegiance at the
slightest provocation. He regards the ***nkumbi***, P 2
with its creation of ***karé*** relationships between [881] •
individual Mbuti and villagers, as a major [608]
factor in maintaining villager authority over
the archers and rendering the latter
dependent on their Lese neighbors.

[P. 185-D]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.216-A]

857 One of their favorite sports is fishing, for which they use small wooden floats with a piece of vine attached, similar to that described by Burrows (1898). Later they split into groups according to sex as well as age. The boys, until they are allowed to take part in the hunt itself, carry out imitation hunts around the camp.
• 881 Even at this age, however, and after under-
882 going the *nkumbi* initiation, they are still under
593 the authority of their mothers. Unlike the information given by Schebesta for the archers, the boys in a net-hunting band do not break completely away from their mothers until they become full hunters, which may be as much as two or more years after their *nkumbi*.

868 Education is through imitation, and both boys and girls have miniature hunting-and-gathering utensils and may, in addition, make miniature replicas of any adult possession (Fig. 45).

[NET HUNTERS]

INITIATION: *elima*

881 [184] The first difference between Putnam's material and that of Schebesta regarding initiation is that among the net hunters there is a form of initiation of girls known as *elima*. Schebesta [114] believes this to be a village custom (*elimo*), but no details are available for comparison. 881 Data on the Mbuti *elima* come mainly from Anne Putnam's notes on several such festivals that she witnessed among the Epulu net hunters. She was unable to get full information, but states that the *elima* (her spelling: *alima*) is held as girls come to the age of puberty—either individually or jointly. At such time the girl, [346] with some of her companions (unmarried girls and those whose breasts had begun to form), enters the *elima* house, a special hut built in the camp in the usual way but larger and with a partition down the middle. The *elima* hut is in the care of one of the old women in the camp, who is also in charge of the instruction of the menstruating girl.

[301] [302] The *elima* lasts about a month. During this time the *elima* girls put on the vine circlets over their heads and under each shoulder (as worn by boy initiates) and paint their faces and bodies with white clay about twice a day, making designs on one another without, apparently, any particular convention. They go out of the camp together to collect vine and wood, also to collect roots and small pieces of wood that will make good ammunition. At

[p. 216-8]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 216-C]

At sundown they return to their hut, which they 881
enter, and start singing the special *elima* songs [533]
taught to the new initiates by the old woman in
charge. The women of the camp sit outside and
also sing, having armed themselves with whips
made from the vine brought by the girls.

The menstruating girl will have sent word to [613]
her lover, who may be of the same band but
must be of a different lineage. He must fight his
way into the hut, through the women armed
with whips and against the shower of missiles
hurled at him by the girls of the *elima*. In the
old days, say the Mbuti, the fighting used to be
serious, and sometimes people were killed. The 881
young man, if successful in gaining admission, 836
had to pay an ax for the privilege of deflowering
his maiden. He remained with her all night. The
next day he was bound with vine and kept a
prisoner in the *elima* hut until evening. He was
then washed and rubbed with ashes and allowed
to leave.

From then onward any eligible young man [831]
(i.e., not of the same lineage as the girl) could [613]
try his luck. If he happened to be the husband [837]
of one of the women guarding the hut, she could

[NET HUNTERS]

claim compensation from him. The women 881
guardians also could make it easy or difficult
for the candidates, according to their inclina- 836
tions. Any man, having fought his way through,
had to secure the girl's permission before he
slept with her. But reliable Mbuti informants [554]
reported that a large number merely fought for
the prestige acquired and sought no intercourse
with the girls. Outwardly, there is no change,
except that instead of firing arrows from their
bows the men fire fruit peel, and the fighting is
less severe than that described in the tales of
olden times. Exactly what happens inside the
hut is not known, but the festival is evidently
an opportunity for young men to prove their
valor, and for young maidens to prove their
womanliness, each one attesting to his or her
readiness for marriage. There is unfortunately
no evidence as to how far the opening of the
elima constitutes a betrothal, nor how frequently it is followed by marriage.

During the course of the *elima* the girls are 881
under certain food restrictions, which include a
prohibition on all meat. *Elima* singing goes on [533]
all night. Presumably, as with the *nkumbi*
initiation of boys, this is a period of discipline
as well as of education. Apart from the special [535]
elima songs, apparently special dances are

[P. 216-D]

[NET HUNTERS]

881 taught to the *elima* initiates. In one such dance
[535] witnessed by Mrs. Putnam, the girls held arrows and cut one another, and the women struck them with whips.

There is no information from the Putnam material as to any particular ceremony to mark the end of the *elima* (but see Turnbull, 1960a, 198 ff.).

Initiation: *nkumbi*

Putnam's notes on the initiation of boys concern a net-hunting band and are particularly interesting, as they describe an initiation that occurred in the Bira village of Kokonyange in 1935, 14 years before Schebesta witnessed an initiation among the same group. It is signifi-
881 cant that Putnam makes no mention of *karé*
608 brotherhood between Pygmy and village boys.

For male initiation among the particular Epulu net hunters we are dealing with, I have only my own field notes,[1] and here again there is no mention of *karé* brotherhood (Turnbull, 1957). The full details of the ceremony do not concern us, as they vary from one village to
[184] another. It is important, however, to compare the relationship between the net-hunting Mbuti and the Bira villagers with that between the archers and the Lese, with regard to initiation.

[NET HUNTERS]

The first *nkumbi* of which I saw something
881 was in 1951 at the village of Effundi Somali. I
114 saw only a part and the final closing ceremony.
608 Although I may well have missed much detail, it is unlikely that I would have missed anything of the nature of a *karé* relationship had one existed. There was certainly no sign of it. The next *nkumbi*, which took place in 1954 at Camp Putnam, was exceptional in that no village boys of the right age were available, so only Mbuti boys were initiated. Thus, there was no question of *karé* relationship between them and villagers, but also, during the entire course of the *nkumbi*, I heard no mention of it. This, together with Putnam's own silence on the subject, would seem to indicate that this relationship is either not so widespread or not so important as Schebesta assumes.

881 The peculiar circumstances of the 1954 *nkumbi* are given briefly here. Though exceptional, they contain some interesting points for

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[114] [1] These covered my visits to the Ituri in 1951 and 1954-1955 only.

[P. 217-B]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 217-C]

comparison with the *nkumbi* as described by P 881
Schebesta for the archers.

In the Epulu region the *nkumbi* takes place P
every three years. It is organized and conducted 177
throughout by the villagers, who invite 881
the Mbuti to take part. The first part of the Z 563
year, from the dry season onward, is considered 881
most suitable. On this particular occasion there
were no village boys of the right age, but the
villagers (Bira and Ndaka) went ahead with
the arrangements as usual. The fact that only
Pygmy boys were to be initiated made no
difference to the celebrations, which were conducted
in the village with full enthusiasm,
bringing villagers from as far as 50 miles away. P
Villagers allowed themselves to be beaten with Z [411]
long sapling whips (Fig. 46) "to give strength" [751]
to the Mbuti candidates.

After a week of preliminary festivities, on the P
day of the first circumcision, the *makata* sticks Z
(a set of eight or nine resonant sticks tuned to a 534
specific scale) were cut and sounded. The 881
makata are heard only during a period of initiation 177
and are destroyed simultaneously with
the initiation camp at the end of the festival.
Villagers and Pygmies joined in a dance with P Z
the *makata*, while others went into the forest a [535]
short distance to make a clearing for the initiation
camp.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

ation camp. While some started erecting the hut, in the style of a bent-over windshield, others prepared a horizontal cross bar between two trees. Five boys were circumcised the first day, and three on separate days during the second week of the *nkumbi*. Not all were cut on the cross bar. Some were taken down to a stream. One was circumcised in the middle of the village; another, in a different place within the initiation camp. The cutting was done to the accompaniment of much drumming, while all the womenfolk of the village were shut up in their huts. No signal was given to indicate when a boy had been cut, though probably the change in the vigor of the drumming and *makata* beating served to notify the women. Only one boy was given a *segbe* pipe to blow, by a particularly superstitious father. The "doctor" wore a mask made of a thin strip of bark (Fig. 48a) and raffia armbands (Fig. 47a) which were thereafter left hanging from the roof of the initiation hut.

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After the circumcision, the wounds were dressed, and the boys immediately were made to begin to learn the initiation songs. Far from

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[P 217-D]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 218-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4

[NET HUNTERS]

Mbuti
Bira FO11

[P.218-A]

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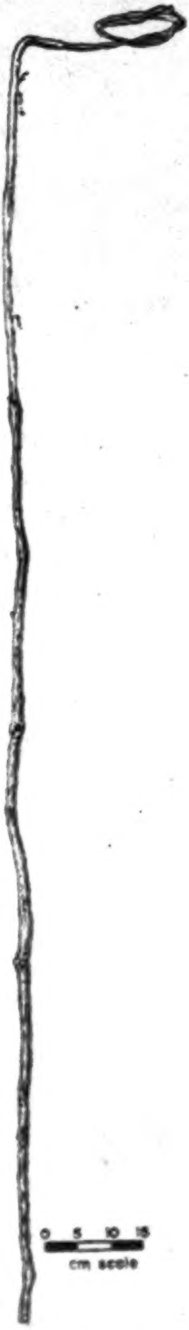

FIG. 46. Initiation whip, *mbaka*, Bira villagers, Central Ituri.

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.218-B]

being confined to their beds for three days, as
mentioned by Schebesta (1952), they were 881
made to move about continually by the villager 177
instructors. The boys' fathers, who were present
at all times, frequently comforted their sons,
apparently to the annoyance of the villagers.
There was, however, no question of the savagery
implied by Schebesta. During the following
two months the boys were strictly disciplined.
There was a process of physical training 881
that was undeniably tough, but it fulfilled only 861
one of the major purposes of the *nkumbi*, 177
namely, to fit boys for adult life. The Mbuti
fathers, however, obviously had different ideas
as to how far this discipline should be carried [571]
and criticized the villagers when they carried
it too far. Further, when there were no villagers
in the camp, the Mbuti talked quite 881
openly and showed by their speech and their 829
behavior that they had no respect for the taboos 177
associated with the festival. It seemed
quite evident that they consciously underwent 881
the *nkumbi*, not because of any religious significance, 177
but because it gave them status in
villager society, in which any uncircumcised
youth is a laughing stock. The important thing,
then, was the circumcision, for this specific
purpose.

[NET HUNTERS]

Further, unlike the initiation described by Schebesta, the *molimo* (Schebesta: *lusomba*) trumpet did not appear during the entire festival, nor was it mentioned. The initiation here seems to be almost completely dissociated from the men's religious association, at least as far as the Mbuti are concerned. The only instruments that were used were the *makata* sticks, small clappers used by the women in their dances during this period, and a bull-roarer (which the boys knew about, though in front of the villagers they pretended otherwise). There was nothing at any time in the ceremony itself, or in the instruction, to connect the *nkumbi* with the Mbuti *molimo* society. Toward the end of the initiation the boys were dressed in grass skirts (Fig. 47) and paraded through the village with leaf masks (Fig. 48b) held between their teeth to prevent them from talking to non-initiates. After the final cere-

2 P 881 534 [114] [575]

2 P 881

2 P [532] [292]

P 881

[P 218-C]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 219-B]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.219-A]

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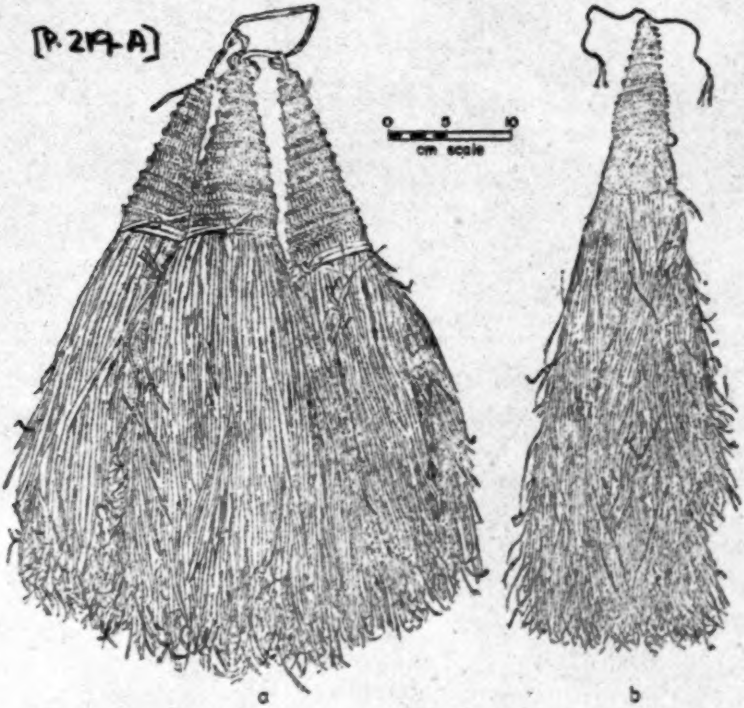

FIG. 47. Initiation items, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Raffia armbands, worn by "doctor" during *nkumbi* dances; at other times, hung from the roof of the initiation hut. b. Grass skirt, worn by initiates at final presentation dance.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

881 mony the boys returned to their hunting band and resumed their previous status.

885 [575] Among the net hunters the Mbuti boys do not participate fully in the proceedings of the *molimo* society until they have proved their prowess as hunters. Putnam does not mention any such elaborate ceremony as that described by Schebesta for the archers, to mark the killing of his first game by a youth, but such an event is simply received among the net hunters with much acclaim and, if possible, feasting and dancing. It may also be accompanied by the cutting of the tattoo marks on the boy's forehead. [304]

881 179 17 [554] It seems that with the net hunters the ***nkumbi*** serves merely to give status in villager society. The Mbuti have different forms of initiation into the religious associations of their own men and women; the ***molimo*** and ***elima***, respectively. They are, at least, forms of initiation practiced

[P. 219 - B]

[NET HUNTERS]

apart from the villagers, whatever the origin of the actual ceremonies. 881 177 171

MARRIAGE

Putnam is able to cite several cases of conflict over marriage, proposed or accomplished, and while such conflict may secondarily be between two lineages, it is primarily between the hunting band (whether it composes a single lineage or more than one) and the individual concerned. Putnam mentions neither arranged marriages nor the betrothal of infants, although there may be bands with whom marriage is preferred. The net-hunting Mbuti themselves simply say "the further away the better," referring to geographical distance. Kinship distance means little to them, though all cite general rules of bilateral lineage exogamy. 58 [578] [621] [613] [613]

Putnam says that the hunting band is meant to be an exogamous unit, but that in 58 621

[P. 219-C]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P-220-A]

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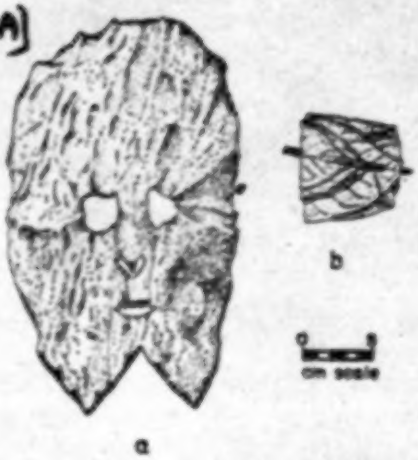

Fig. 48. Initiation masks, Bira villagers, Central Ituri. a. Bark mask, worn by Bira and Ndaka initiators during the preliminary *nkumbi* dances. b. Leaf mouth-mask, worn in mouth of initiates when paraded through village.

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fact marriages within the band occur and are in fact often favored as they can be arranged without any ceremony. Ceremony occurs, he says, only when a marriage involves two different bands. Intra-band marriage is made possible, even within the bounds of lineage exogamy, by the practice of maintaining a number of "resident aliens." A net-hunting camp, always

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 220-C]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The relationship between the net-hunting P 177
band, or between individual members of it, and 571
village patrons is dealt with separately. It 881
has already been mentioned that Putnam Z
speaks of its current foundation in trade, and of 563
how the joint *nkumbi*, unlike that of the 571
archers, seems not to have the same significance 881
for villager and Mbuti. For the villager it is a P
tribal initiation in its usual sense and with its [554]
usual implications; for the Mbuti the *nkumbi* is
a means of acquiring status in an alien community.
It does not seem to initiate both into P
identical social or religious associations, such as Z
the *toré* society described by Schebesta (1952, [575]
278).

Also, there is no evidence of blood brother- P
hood or of a *karé* relationship between villagers 575
and net hunters. When we deal with religious 571
associations among the net hunters, we deal P
with exclusively Mbuti associations. This is not Z
to deny that a close relationship exists between [608]
an Mbuti and his villager patron, which, in Z
fact, Putnam stresses; nor does it deny the fact [575]
that Mbuti may be invited to take part in the [571]
meetings of villager associations, and that villagers may conversely be invited to take part in the meetings of Mbuti associations (though information on joint meetings is lacking). All our material deals with exclusive meetings of the *elima* and *molimo*, as held by the Mbuti women and men, respectively.

Information on the *elima* is scant; there is no P
evidence of any ritual other than the singing of 575

[P. 223-D]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 224-B]

[NET HUNTERS]

ter. During this time the food was being cooked, 765
and the women were still chattering, though 533
shut up in their huts. After eating, and when all
the women were silent, the serious singing began.

Final mention should be made of the coinci- 575
dence of an *elima* initiation and a *molimo* meet- 881 •
ing, described by Anne Putnam. It is the cus- 796
tom of the *elima* to sing through the night, as do 533
the boys of the initiation during the *nkumbi*.
When the women once found themselves rivaled
by some men singing the "hunting" *molimo*,
they competed but were sung down and finally
gave up. As soon as the sounds of the *molimo* [534]
trumpet died into the distance, however, the
women started up again. When it was a case of [765]
death, and serious *molimo* singing, the women
offered no competition.

It is told by these Mbuti that in the old days 173
the *molimo* was an animal that belonged to the 534
women, and all the men had to run away every 825
time they saw it. But then the men caught the 562

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[1] Subsequently I saw many more meetings of the *molimo* association (1960b, 1961) and its two different aspects were clarified and reconciled.

[P 227-D]

[NET HUNTERS]

Z The villagers, says Putnam (1948, 324), re-
186 gard the Mbuti as a class of beings somewhere
563 between humans and animals. They take
Pygmy wives, however, because they are prolific and good to sleep with, and the children of such unions are considered as full human beings and are brought up as such. Further, the villagers think of the Mbuti as barbaric and uncultured, but this attitude does not affect their mutual affection.

There is some evidence that respect for the Mbuti, in some form, is not lacking among the villagers. Geluwe (1956) mentions the Bira custom of offering first fruits from the plantations to the Pygmies. Anne Putnam says that the villagers agree with the Pygmies and that the latter have the right to take what food they want from the plantations following the killing of an elephant. Possoz (1954, 2575) suggests that there are linguistic grounds for assuming that the villagers originally referred to the Mbuti by a term denoting respect for them because of their closer connection with the forest spirits.

P Putnam mentions trade and the *nkumbi* as
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177 two of the major factors, apart from personal
439 relations at an inter-familial level, in maintain-
881 ing the Mbuti-villager relationship.

571 Another important factor in interaction is
P the dance. When the Mbuti stay near the vil-
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535 [P. 229-B]
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[P. 246-C]

Another very striking difference between the 184
archers and the net hunters concerns the initia- 177
tion of boys. As this is treated more fully below 881
(p. 252), we only indicate here the fact of the 608
total absence of any *karé* brotherhood between Pygmy and villager initiates among the net hunters. Schebesta, on the other hand, places [575]
great importance on this pact for his archers,
probably because of his insistence (1952, 281) on the fact that the *nkumbi* initiation is an initiation into the religious association of *toré* for both Mbuti and villagers. This is denied by [114]
Costermans (1938) for the archers and is contradicted by my own experience among the net hunters. In any case, if there is a difference between the two groups over the significance of *nkumbi* initiation (and it may well be only a difference of interpretation rather than of fact), it does not seem directly related to any difference in hunting technique.

Similarly, with marriage, separation, death, 184
funerals, childbirth, and other occasions with 296
ritual connections, such difference as exists in 177
the two accounts seems to be associated more directly with prevailing differences in villager custom rather than with any inherent differences in the Mbuti communities. This, and the nature and function of the closed associations, are more properly the subject of discussion of the Mbuti-villager relationship rather than the difference between net hunters and archers, which is our main concern here.

[P.247-A]

578 have taken part or not. With Schebesta's arch-
621 ers it seems that the lineage elder is the final
627 authority, below which rank the family heads.

[184] [554] Whereas the status of men is related to hunt-
ing ability and to proficiency in the arts of
554 mime, dance, and song, the factors involved in
555 determining the status of women are not clear.
562 Fertility is probably one factor, and, almost
certainly, ability as a singer another, for a good
singer takes a leading part in the *elima* celebra-
554 tions. The *elima* itself may be connected with
881 adult male status, since one of its main features
is the battle between the young men seeking to
gain admission to the *elima* hut and the women
guarding it. Married men may and do take part
in this battle, but there comes a point when a
man has neither the incentive nor, possibly, the
necessary stamina. Anne Putnam writes of one
elderly Mbuti, still active as a hunter, who was
seen to cry during an *elima* festival. In response
to a question he answered: "I fought my way
into many an Alima hut when I was younger.
Now I have no desires. It saddens me" (Put-
[558] nam, 1954, 218). A young man who does not
take part in the *elima* is a subject for ridicule.

554 881 The fact that men go through the not inconsiderable beating inflicted on them by the women in order to gain admission, without ever taking advantage of the young maidens then available to them, is another indication of the function of the *elima* in determining male status.

555 224 Male status depends primarily on skill in the
hunt; this may be deliberately acquired by in-
dividual exploits such as elephant hunting.
Among certain bands elephant hunting is a
[439] specialized profession, the ivory being used for
trade. Among the Epulu net hunters it is not so.
It is an exceptional occurrence and, as de-
scribed by Anne Putnam (1954, 143 ff.), may be
undertaken without any thought for the food or
ivory, at times when the band has no need of
extra meat or of trade with the villagers. On
this occasion the Pygmy hunter admits that he
was frightened. He describes how he killed the
elephant simply because he felt compelled to do
so. This compulsion may have arisen in part by
[825] virtue of his reputation as a great hunter, and
in part from constant opposition between the
human world and the animal world, and the
constant effort of the Mbuti to assert the supe-
riority of the former.

224 825 This latter aspect was also witnessed in the ceremony described by Anne Putnam (1954,

[P. 247-B]

In so far as individual magic is concerned, it P
seems that its practice among the Mbuti, when 789
taken over from the villager, is of no more significance
than our own superstitious crossing of
the fingers, touching of wood, or avoidance of
walking under ladders. When Pygmies call in P
villager specialists to perform magic for them, [177]
mainly to improve hunting, we have at least to
consider the possibility of a mere political maneuver.

DANCE AND FESTIVITY

Villagers and Pygmies associate frequently at P 527
festive seasons or occasions. Pygmies will attend 177
any village festival, and when they have Z
an occasion of their own (such as the killing of 527
an elephant) they first celebrate in their forest 177
camp, then break camp and continue their celebrations
in the village.

Dance is an important feature of any celebration, Z P
villager or Pygmy, but in this the two 535
never mix. They watch each other's dances with 177
enjoyment, but take part only in fun. One ex- [881]

[P. 250-D]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 ●
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P.251-A]

P Z 535 177 [881]

ception is the ritual ***makata*** dance which is held only during the *nkumbi.*

● Even in ordinary times, when a hunting band is visiting a village, it may come down to the main meeting place in the evening and dance.

P 535 177 [517]

The villagers expect it and regard it as one of their forms of entertainment, though they say they consider the Pygmy dance barbaric.

Z 177 [186]

The Pygmy definitely fills the role of entertainer and is not infrequently called on by the villagers to dance.

P 361 571 177

When the two groups meet on both festive and ordinary occasions they keep apart from each other. There is no leisure activity in which they participate together, only a few ritual activities (which are discussed below).

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The Mbuti camp beside the village, on the edge of the plantation where the forest begins. This physical disposition of the two communities, which seems to be invariable throughout the Ituri, and general Pygmy behavior in the village may well symbolize the contiguous nature of the relationship between the two peoples, as opposed to any close symbiosis such as was alleged by Schebesta.

P [P.252-A]
583 local villager custom. The latter ceremony is
585 conducted entirely by the villagers and at their
177 expense. On these occasions the villager takes
Z the leading part and carries out his own ritual,
563 but the Pygmy does not let this supplant his
585 own indigenous way of recognizing the event.
The villager ceremony is something the Pygmy
adds to his own.

P With initiation the situation may seem to be
177 different. The Mbuti have not only adopted the
• 881 villager custom of initiation accompanied by
575 circumcision, known as ***nkumbi***, but they attend
Z the same initiation schools which are always
563 run by villagers, never by Pygmies. Initiation
881 is nothing if not entry into a very definite indig-
575 enous system of values, yet here we have the
Mbuti placing themselves in a totally subordinate position. The ***nkumbi***, according to Schebesta (1952, 281), initiates the youth, Pygmy or villager, into membership of the Lese *toré* association (for the archers) or its Bira equivalent, the ***molimo*** (for the net hunters). The function

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

P of this association is not clear from his various
177 accounts, but he is emphatic that it is closely
• 881 connected with religious belief and practice. If
575 so, then he would be perfectly justified in stat-
Z ing, as he does (Schebesta, 1952, 278), that
563 nothing has made the Mbuti so dependent on
881 the villager as the *nkumbi*. It would all fall
575 neatly into the picture he gives, or tries to give,
of a clear-cut symbiotic relationship between
the two peoples.

P Schebesta (1952) describes initiation for the
177 net hunters. All that he says would be confirmed
881 by casual observation of the practice of *nkumbi*
Z 563 in the Epulu District, among the net hunters
881 and their Bira neighbors. As may be seen in the
P survey, however, there is one striking differ-
Z ence between the account by Putnam and that
[114] by Schebesta, and that is the lack in Putnam's
[608] description of any institution such as *kari*
brotherhood. Apart from this, from Putnam's
detailed account of the 1935–1936 *nkumbi* at
Kokonyange and from my own observations of
the *nkumbi* at Effundi Somali's village (near
Epulu) in 1951, there would be nothing to contradict Schebesta's fact or theory. The Pygmy boys appear to go through the *nkumbi* on equal terms with the villager boys, except that the ceremony, instruction, and the camp itself are run entirely by the villagers and according to a custom that is generally acknowledged to be of villager (probably Bira) origin.

[P 252-B]

In the survey, in giving my own account of 114
the next *nkumbi* (1954) that I witnessed in the 186
Epulu District, I show how, under peculiar cir- 881
cumstances, when no villagers are present in
the initiation camp, the Mbuti men and boys
take the opportunity to mock both the villagers
and their ceremony. This burlesque would not
be enough in itself to indicate that the Mbuti
completely rejected the *nkumbi* or, indeed, that
they are doing any more than many individuals
or groups do who occupy subordinate posi-
tions.[1] I suggest, however, in the survey, that [554]
there is such a rejection, and that the Mbuti [177)
undergo the *nkumbi* in order to acquire status
in villager society; further, that the *nkumbi* for
them is quite dissociated from initiation into
the *molimo* association.

In order to follow this important point further, as it is one of the most significant pieces of information we have on the villager-Mbuti relationship, I must refer to a full account of the 1954 *nkumbi*, compiled from my field notes (Turnbull, 1957). From this we get sufficient indications to justify a rejection of Schebesta's analysis of Mbuti participation in the *nkumbi*.

This analysis, in any case, could stand only by isolating the *nkumbi* or by relating it only to other villager institutions in the villager society. When we try to relate the *nkumbi* to Pygmy institutions, Schebesta's interpretation cannot hold.

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In the 1954 *nkumbi* there was a very evident divorce between initiative and authority. The villagers took most of the initiative; they decided when the *nkumbi* should be held and made all the necessary arrangements. Villagers carried out the operations and gave all the instruction. But their authority over the Pygmy *ganza* (members of the *nkumbi*) was far from complete. The Pygmies decided which boys should take part, without reference to the villagers; though they made use of Effundi Somali, a village chief, to reinforce their own demand that a certain boy should take part (Turnbull, 1957, 197). During and following the operation, the Mbuti fathers acted contrary to villager custom and in the face of villager disapproval by comforting their children. Both fathers and children ignored the various taboos imposed by the vil-

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[1] The burlesquing attitude of the Mbuti is significant but could possibly be interpreted merely as a psychological reaction to subordination. It is in the light of other facts that we think differently.

[P. 252-D]

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lagers when it suited them to do so. In the dispute over the visit of the *ganza* to the forest hunting camp, the villagers were quite unable to enforce their will or even to enforce the compromise they finally effected with the Mbuti. The villagers themselves made no major decisions concerning the arrangement or carrying out of the *nkumbi* without at least discussing the matter with the Pygmy fathers. No difference was observable in the preparations or the ceremony that could be attributed to the fact that Mbuti only were being initiated.

The account given shows not only the extent to which the villagers were unable to control the *ganza*, but also the thoroughness with which they attempted to dominate the initiation. Despite the fact that the *ganza* were entirely Pygmy, for the villagers the *nkumbi* was nonetheless sacred. They were interested in the *nkumbi* itself rather than in the individuals participating. Whether or not the villagers thought that by initiating the Mbuti they were subjecting them to tribal and supernatural authority is uncertain, though Schebesta (1952, 278; 1948, chap. 7) so suggests. The evidence considered here suggests that the villagers not only lacked control over the Pygmy *ganza*, but were not particularly rigorous in maintaining it, except in so far as any desecration of the initiation camp or the *nkumbi* itself was concerned. It seems that the villager was primarily interested in the *nkumbi* as a tribal festival; if any subordination of the Pygmies took place, it was incidental.

177 186 881 Similarly any subordination on the part of the Pygmies was incidental and insignificant, though they lost no opportunity for maintaining their individuality when their feelings clashed with those of the villagers. Unlike the latter, they had no interest in the *nkumbi* as such. This lack of interest was manifest from the outset, when the village was in a state of festive turmoil in preparation for the ceremony, and the Pygmy camp was unchanged. This lack of interest was frequently manifest as total disrespect. Apart from the breaking of such touch and food taboos as were imposed by villager custom, and the general burlesquing among the *ganza* as described in the account, there was the attitude of the rest of the Mbuti band—notably the women and children. The [859] young children in their forest camp found a new game to play. They were the *ganza*, imitating all

[P 253-B]

the major aspects of life in the initiation camp, 177
including some of the ordeals. They not only 186
knew the initiation songs, but were taught them 881
by their mothers, who even more than their [857]
uninitiated male children were supposed to be
in complete ignorance of such matters.

When the *ganza* moved to the forest, the 177
instructors did not come with them, and the 881
ganza had only occasional visits from one villager
who stayed in the nearby Mbuti hunting
camp. There were no ordeals during this time,
no singing except when visited by the solitary
villager, and no other form of instruction by the
Pygmies to replace that of the villagers. The
boys did not accompany the hunt. It seemed to [527]
be, for both children and the adult members of
the *ganza*, a holiday camp, free from the rigors
of the initiation school.

But if the Mbuti showed no respect for the 177
ceremonial or ritual significance of the *nkumbi*, 861
they could scarcely avoid respecting the physical 881
discipline imposed by the various ordeals
they had to undergo. This was a frequent topic

of conversation. Both by their conversation and 177
their behavior they showed that they were well 861
aware of the benefit of this training for the
children. The older men talked of ordeals that 881
their "fathers" had experienced (apparently without reference to any villager *nkumbi*) in order to make them into men and hunters (both terms were used). They were always critical of any sign of excessive harshness on the part of the villager instructors and protected their children from it. But, on the other hand, the fathers showed no sympathy for a boy who could not endure the normal rigors of camp life and accept the routine ordeals without complaint, and it will be remembered that the boy who became ill himself insisted on returning to his place among the other boys before he had completely recovered (Turnbull, 1957).

It is, at the moment, an open question [554]
whether the Mbuti respect the physical discipline of the *nkumbi* because of its effect on the boys, or because of the status it gives their children in the eyes of the villagers, under normal circumstances equating the Mbuti (at least in terms of manliness) with their fellow villager initiates. The fact that no ordeals were practiced in the forest camp is perhaps an indication that the Mbuti do not lay very much stress on the physical and mental training aspect of the *nkumbi*. These are, in any case, benefits that

[p. 253-D]

P [P.254-A]

177 881 861 Z [563] they could quite well achieve in their own way. Such practical benefits as there may be do not demonstrate why the Mbuti should participate in the villager *nkumbi* any more than does the often alleged subordination of the Mbuti to villager authority and custom. The obvious rejection by the Mbuti of the significance attributed to the *nkumbi* by the villager and the relatively passive acceptance by the villager of this rejection serve only to emphasize the hiatus between the two people. They certainly do not demonstrate that the *nkumbi* serves to draw them closer together or to assert the authority of the villager over the Pygmy.

P Z 181 182 881 This hiatus becomes even more evident when we consider the religious aspect of the *nkumbi*, as far as the Mbuti are concerned. It is a hiatus not only between two ways of living but between two ways of thinking, and it shows that we are dealing with two totally different sets of values. What the *nkumbi* achieves for the village boy bears little resemblance to what it achieves for the Pygmy. Ceremonial, ritual, and magic are ways of interpreting or influencing the supernatural in terms of the natural, and in his forest environment the Pygmy has relatively little need of either. It is not surprising then that his attitude to the ceremonial and ritual of the *nkumbi* differs from that of the villager. To

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

To
Z the villager the masked dancers described in the
182 account of the 1954 *nkumbi* (Turnbull, 1957,
881 193) represent the *ngosa* bird, indicating the
776 presence of a benevolent spirit. Similarly, the
778 bullroarer represents supernatural power. The
[825] various taboos applied to the *ganza* express
[532] village subordination to that power which is
[535] sufficiently strong to prevent the villagers from
staying in the camp over night even though it
meant allowing an already unruly *ganza* further
scope for getting out of control. The *nkumbi*
places the villager initiates in a definite relationship
Z to the supernatural. It is closely connected
[769] with tribal lore and the ancestor cult.

P The Pygmies have no tribal lore and no ancestor
177 cult. To them the masked dancers were
881 the villagers, André and Sabani, and the bullroarer
776 was a piece of wood whirled around on
778 the end of a length of twine. The "*ngosa* bird"
829 and the "voice of the spirit," for the Mbuti,
were neither "real" nor did they represent any
reality. They were empty and rather ineffective
theatrical devices, an opinion evidenced both by
conversation among the ganza at
night and in their constant
burlesque.

[P. 254-B]

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P. 254-C]

conversation among the *ganza* at night and in their constant burlesque. 000

Schebesta (1948, 508–510) says that, for the archers, the *toré* association has both social and religious functions and that membership is common to both villagers and Pygmies through the *nkumbi* initiation. Among the net hunters the term *molimo* is used instead of the term *toré*, and among the Bira villagers the word has apparently similar usage. Thus the *molimo* horn is an instrument that is sacred to both villagers and Mbuti. The villager *molimo* normally makes itself heard during the *nkumbi*, when the young initiates are introduced to it for the first time. It made no appearance at all during the all-Pygmy 1954 *nkumbi*. Evidently it was unable to appear as there were no villager boys among the *ganza*, and the villager *molimo* has a distinct totemic aspect that excludes the Mbuti. Yet for the Mbuti, in particular, the instrument is associated with their most profound magico-religious concepts, and it is inconceivable that they should regard the *nkumbi* as initiation into their own religious society without the inclusion of their version of the *molimo* horn.

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

"Initiation" in its broadest sense implies P
admission to some form of exclusive association 881
or adoption of a certain system of values. The 1954 *nkumbi* cannot be regarded as initiation for the Mbuti under this definition. Although the circumstances were unusual, in that no villager boys were available to share the *nkumbi* with the Pygmy boys, it is precisely this factor that throws a new light on the more usual joint participation of both groups. If it is not "initiation" for the Mbuti, what is it?

We seem to be in the presence of an attempt P
to maintain or establish some kind of common Z
ground between two neighboring peoples who 177
can find no common values, yet who inevitably 181
come into contact with each other. We have P
seen that the original point of contact was the Z
use of the Mbuti, by warring villagers, as mer- 17
cenary soldiers, spies, and scouts. While acting 439
in this capacity the Mbuti were necessarily dependent on the villagers for food supplies. The Mbuti were also used by the villagers to hunt elephant and to bring in tusks for the ivory trade. But, with the cessation of tribal warfare and the government control of ivory, these relationships came to an end. The villager no longer had any use for the Pygmy, who in

[P. 254-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

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If we look at the situation in reverse, the fact that the Mbuti simultaneously participate in the *nkumbi* and reject its significance indicates the instability of their relationship with the villagers. The villagers would undoubtedly like to assert their superiority but are unable to maintain effective control over the nomadic Mbuti, either as individuals or in bands, during the *nkumbi* or at any other time. The *nkumbi*, however, does at least place the villagers in an overt position of dominance. On the other hand, the Mbuti would like to be completely free from subordination to the villagers, yet they find it as necessary to submit to initiation in villager society as the villagers find it necessary to accept them as candidates. The *nkumbi* undoubtedly gives the villagers an opportunity to drive the first blow in asserting their superiority over the Mbuti, but at the same time it gives the Pygmy status, as well as economic benefits, in any village throughout the region. It also strengthens his own identity as a Pygmy by enabling him to reject the villager system of values in mimetic burlesque. The 1954 *nkumbi* shows the extent to which these particular Mbuti preserve their "in-group" feeling.

[P 255-B]

tionship—mutual trade. Trade may be an initial step in the direction of the symbiosis described by Schebesta (1941, 263) for the archers and their Lese neighbors. Joint participation in the *nkumbi* indicates no more than a willingness on both sides to acknowledge an unavoidable relationship based, as much as anything, on mere territorial propinquity. P 621 628 177 P Z [881] •

What at first appears to be a conformity by the Mbuti to villager custom now appears as a superficial conformity at best and one that barely conceals a detachment of two ways of life. By his participation in the *nkumbi*, and, we may suspect, in other villager institutions, the Mbuti shows his willingness to accept an outwardly subordinate position in villager society. This acceptance is partly responsible for the popular notion that the relationship is one of master-servant or patron-client. His rejection of the inner significance of the ceremonial shows not only a superficiality in the process of acculturation and assimilation but a conscious effort on the part of the Pygmy to keep his two worlds apart—the sacred world of the forest, with one set of values, and the profane world of the villager, invader of the forest, with another set of values. The Epulu Mbuti, at least, have P 177 18

[P. 255-D]

[P 256-A]

177 as yet assumed village values in name only, and
18 only for the duration of their contact outside
the forest where their own values do not apply.

177 This interpretation of the function of the
18 *nkumbi* initiation ceremony as providing an
outward symbol of the association of two neigh-
121 boring peoples that, for one reason or another,
[881] come into contact and cooperate is very similar
to the interpretation by Peristiany (1951, 299)
of initiation among the Pokot and Karamajong: "The recognition of a common system of age ranks by these two neighbouring peoples permits them to move with ease in each other's society and allows, during peace-time, the extension of social bonds and the obliteration of cultural frontiers."

[791] In the Ituri such a statement could also apply
to relationships not only between Mbuti and villagers but between neighboring village tribes themselves, such as the Ndaka, Bira, and Lese.

177 We indicate above that the *nkumbi* could not
881 be considered as "initiation" by the Mbuti
18 who practice it, as it does not admit them to
any exclusive (villager) association or to any exclusive system of values, except possibly on a superficial level. We also suggest that the

177 881 18 *nkumbi* offers the Mbuti an opportunity for asserting their individuality at the same time that they are subordinating themselves to the villagers, by asserting an independent system of values. In the *nkumbi*, as in other villager ceremonies practiced by the Mbuti, there is an opposition between the pygmaean forest world and the non-forest world of the villagers. This subject is dealt with in the final section; here a word should be said about the forest values themselves.

575 In the survey we mention two exclusive associations to which the net-hunting Mbuti are admitted—the *molimo* for the men, and the *elima* for the women. As far as our observations go, there is no reason at all for connecting the Mbuti *molimo* association with the *lusumba* or the *molimo* of the neighboring Bira and Ndaka. They may or may not have similar origins, but in the present situation they seem entirely dissociated. We may well suspect that this is also
575 881 true of the archers' *toré* society. It is certain, at all events, that the *nkumbi* by itself does not initiate Mbuti boys into membership of the *molimo* (by this term I always refer to the Mbuti institution unless otherwise stated). At the end of the 1954 *nkumbi* the boys all reverted

[P. 256-B]

[P.256-C]

to their previous status in the Pygmy camp and 575
even returned to the care and authority of their 881 •
mothers. None of these boys was allowed to
take part in subsequent meetings of the *molimo*. 882
The reason—they were not "hunters," they had 885
not killed "real animals" (i.e., animals large 224
enough to be worth distributing among the [575]
band, as opposed to the small animals caught by children and that are not worth dividing except within the family). To kill "real animals," usually antelope, a boy must be old enough to be allowed to wander away from his father during the hunt and to try his luck at either end of the semicircle of nets, where animals might escape and be shot with bow and arrow, speared, or caught with the hands.

Entry into the *molimo* therefore depends on 575
a combination of physical growth and prowess. 885
Boys seem to qualify by the time they reach the age of 14. Once a member, one is a full member; there is no hierarchy within the *molimo*; like the *elima* it is a religious association without priests. There is no ritual to be performed; all members play the same part in the meetings of the association with the exception of one who is delegated to play the *molimo* horn. The choice invariably falls on the best performer present, without regard for age or other qualifications.

With the *elima* it is similar. All adult women 575
are members, and participation is compulsory 796
in one's own camp or when visiting another. [885]
Communication with the forest God is again
established by means of songs, special and sacred [533]
to the *elima*. However, the men take part. [776]
The *elima* meets on occasions of major concern [778]
to womenfolk—birth, arrival at the age of puberty,
marriage, and death. Thus at birth and
death, both the *elima* and the *molimo* are concerned.
(As mentioned, however, the occasion
of birth is little marked by ritual of any kind.)
Both associations meet in the forest camp but
out of sight of each other. The *elima* meets in
the large *elima* hut or in a cluster of neighboring
huts. Young children may be present. The exception, [858]
when the men take part in the meeting
of the *elima*, is during the initiation of a girl.

In the survey we give an account of *elima* 881 •
initiation (p. 216). If the *nkumbi* is not the initiation 885
into the *molimo*, we must look elsewhere 224
for this. When a boy kills his first "real animal," 575
he is immediately acclaimed as a hunter, and

[P. 257-D]

[P. 258-A]

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575 hunters are *de facto* members of the *molimo*. I have never witnessed nor been told of any formal rite introducing the new hunter to the association, and I do not believe that there is any such rite. The boy already knows all the *molimo* songs and has probably been allowed, for the past year or so, to sit with the men during the informal meetings of the association. The only act that might be regarded as a formal token of initiation is the cutting of three sets of three vertical slits in the flesh of the forehead, each side of the eyes or above the eyebrows, and above the nose. The flesh is gouged out with an arrow, and a black paste is rubbed in. The wound heals smoothly, leaving black streaks under the skin. The operation is performed without any formality by one of the "great hunters," that is, one who has killed buffalo or elephant. The initiate, if he can be called such, becomes the immediate object of interest to the womenfolk, as he is now considered marriageable. But the marks themselves do not qualify him for membership in the *molimo*, nor does their absence debar him from taking part. All that seems to be required is public recognition of his having killed "real game," marked by the kind of feasting and dancing that always follows a particularly successful hunt.

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881 The contrast between the more formal *elima* initiation and this informal initiation into the *molimo* requires explanation, and more needs to be known about the function of these associations before any such explanation can be offered. It may be, in part, a consequence of the participation of Pygmy boys in the *nkumbi*; it may be that, as Schebesta (1957, 78) suggests, the *elima* (*elimo*) is of villager origin and has been adopted by the Pygmies. Or it may be that we have underestimated the part played by the young men in the *elima* festival described (p. 216). It is for both girls and boys, equally, a formal occasion recognizing their physical maturity and their prowess—the girls as proficient in womanly art and the boys as proficient in physical strength and endurance.

575 [881] Until further material is available it is impossible to elaborate on initiation among the Mbuti. It is sufficient to show that, among the net hunters at least, religious associations there exist for men and women, each with some form of initiation practiced without the aid or presence of villagers, whatever the origin of the actual ceremonies. The function of these asso-

[P 258-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

The function of these associations1 is to regulate the relationship of these 575
Mbuti with their forest world, to maintain the 182
normality of that relationship and to restore it 796
when disturbed, by rousing the God of the For- 778
est from his sleep by song, echoed into the forest 776
by means of the *molimo* horn in the case of 533
formal meetings of the men's association. This
god is the source of good and bad, and it is
therefore sufficient to waken him. There is no [782]
formal supplication phrased in words as such.

The *molimo* and *elima* are distinct from vil- 575
lage association with similar names and from 177
whatever association it is into which the *nkumbi*
initiates the villagers. Mbuti participation in
the *nkumbi*, as in other village ceremonies, is
part of the mutual attempt of two peoples
forced together by historical reasons and pre-
sent territorial juxtaposition to regularize their
relationship, each to his own satisfaction. Trade [439]
is another such expression of their relationship;
it is not the basis of it. Further, participation in [881] •
the *nkumbi* involves an opposition between two [554]
sets of values (those of the villagers and those [171]
of the Mbuti taking part), as *nkumbi* initiation [181]
does not qualify the Mbuti for entry into his
own religious association nor accord him any
status in his own society. It enables him to
move as an adult in villager society and gives
the two peoples some common ground involving
a superficially subordinate position for the
Mbuti.

1, [Molimo and Elima associations
--Analyst]

[P. 258-C]

[P. 259-A]

533 182 any major crisis affecting the community as a
whole. But, as well as these religious activities,
both major economic activities, hunting and
gathering, are also consecrated by special types
of song. It is inconceivable that the Mbuti, who
accompany every important event in their lives
with song, should not consecrate the initiation
533 881 182 of their boys in this same way. But for the
nkumbi they have no music at all. As we have
said, in 1954 the *molimo* horn was not heard,
and no *molimo* songs were sung. I suggest that
other initiations, in which the horn and songs
are heard, are in connection with villager institutions
to which the village boys are being initiated.
The only conclusion we can draw is that
for the Mbuti the *nkumbi* is not sufficiently significant
in their forest life to merit consecration
by forest song.

533 182 181 This is closely paralleled by the absence of
forest music (songs of the *molimo* and *elima*,
hunting-and-gathering songs) when the Mbuti
are camped on the edge of a village. When they
do, the Mbuti themselves behave as different
people. In the forest they feel and observe a
[778] certain restraint. Their songs are related to and
emphasize their supreme value—the forest.
Their daily activities are dominated by the forest
and the hunt and the need for close cooperation.

[P.274-A]

177 theirs. There is also evidence, but in regrettably
439 little detail, that certain hunting bands main-
184 tain a client-patron relationship by specializing
in elephant hunting, bringing the tusks to the villagers, on whom they rely for all vegetable products and on the edge of whose villages they live in permanent camps.

177 However, no matter how great or little the degree of dependence on the villagers, the Mbuti for whom we have any information all seem to maintain a distinct individuality in opposition to the villagers, despite their apparent
[881] adoption of villager institutions and even of villager language. With regard to the adoption of villager customs, the 1954 *nkumbi* shows the degree to which this adoption may be a mere superficial conformity and may indeed conceal a formal rejection of villager values. A very careful study should be made of all such institutions held in common, if not practiced jointly.

177 It is indeed at this level that we seem to find
184 some excuse for referring to the Ituri Mbuti as a single people rather than as consisting of a number of widely scattered, semi-independent

PLATE 38 ^1

535 GIRLS' HOOP DANCE, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

533 Dance, together with song, forms the major outlet of artistic expression for the Mbuti.
796 The line between sacred and secular is almost non-existent. The hoop dance is used by girls
• 881 and women to celebrate the *elima*, or puberty, of one of their number, but it may be seen
also as an idle moment in almost any day. Words of accompanying songs are nearly in-
517 variably in praise of the forest.

1, /Plate 38 appears on page 309--Analyst/
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[P. 308]

1: Turnbull E-4.5/ (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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/Plate 38/

[P309] /Caption appears on p.308/

621 falls unhappily apart however, and it looks indeed as if the Mbuti are
*177 in the process of adopting villager institutions wholesale, without adopting the system that would relate them.

• [881] Further evidence in favor of this interesting half-truth of Mbuti dependence is plainly discernible in the adoption by the Mbuti of village ceremonials connected with *rites de passage*, in which they subject themselves completely to villager ritual authority. But again these adopted institutions seem to have little structural relationship to the Mbuti hunting life, divorced as it is from the village context. Once one grants that divorce, then one is left with an apparent vacuum, a lack of internal system that is almost anarchical. Yet there is no anarchy; law and order exist without the villager context as within, and without as in their villager institutions. In default of any clear exposition of internal system, however, it has been assumed by many that the actual situation is one of total Mbuti dependence upon the villagers.

222 The economy of the Mbuti is hunting and gathering, and they are
224 perfectly capable of independent subsistence. Hunger, in absence of
village food supplies, is due only to laziness. The alleged economic
224 dependence of the Mbuti will be discussed in the next chapter. Here
476 it is only necessary to stress the possibility of their actual indepen-
*[177] dence of the village, and point to a dependence upon each other, best seen in the fact that all the hunting techniques involve some measure of co-operation between men, women and children. The net-hunt demands the greatest measure of co-operation; the little I was able to discover about spear-hunts indicates a preference for hunting parties of five or six men; and while archers can hunt successfully in threes, there are among the archers annual beat-hunts (*begbe*) which demand the same high degree of co-operation demanded by the net-hunt, involving the entire band. Some elementary principles of unity can be discerned, then, in these various hunting techniques, but they are not sufficient to fill the gap left by the absence of developed kinship or political systems.

621 In the hunting band, as we have seen, the population is somewhat
mercurial and composite. Only when the band fragments into smaller
units do we occasionally get a fragment that has some appearance of
being a kin group. System still eludes us. Nor do the *sultani* and *capita*
[622] offer any effective replacement for the missing political system. No
one individual is effectively a leader; issues are settled by common

discussion. The discussion is not entirely haphazard, but once again 621
the structural factor is elusive.

When first we look at the religious life of the Mbuti we feel the 771
pulse beating clearly. The *elima* and the *molimo* are outstandingly 796
evident as institutions connected with crisis, but the moment we try [881] •
to analyze their function the beat becomes less distinct. Here the [765]
picture is again confused by the fact that the villagers have similar [177]*
names for ceremonies of their own that are alike enough to lead to
the assumption that the Mbuti adopted these institutions into their
own disorganized framework. Then the pulse stops altogether.

I suggested earlier (Turnbull, 1956) that part of the answer lay in 121
a vital opposition between the two worlds of the Mbuti, the forest and 177*
the village. Recognizing that opposition is no less a relationship than 621
any other form of relationship, we can at least theoretically separate the two worlds temporarily, if they are truly in opposition, and study them apart. Using this device we are free to look at the Mbuti in the village context almost as though this were their sole existence, and discern there what system we can. We are also free to examine the same people in the forest context, living in small nomadic hunting bands, virtually independent of the village world. But by looking at the village world first, when we turn to the forest world we shall be able to follow the Mbuti not only as they move from one hunting camp to another, but also when they abandon the forest for a brief spell in the village, seized by a whim, by the desire for relaxation, or by their taste for village foods, wine and tobacco. In this way we shall arrive at a better understanding of both worlds of the Mbuti, and of the actual relationship between them. We shall also, in the process, test our hypothesis of opposition, and, if it be proven, discover the elusive principle that binds together the otherwise apparently lawless, leaderless, un-kin-conscious forest society.

[P.30 is blank]

881/ Of all the various *rites de passage* practiced by the villagers, and to
which they are forced to introduce the Mbuti, none probably is so
C important as the *nkumbi* initiation of the boys into manhood. Among
[191] the Bantu tribes this is practiced with circumcision, among the
Sudanic it is without circumcision, though there is a tendency among
some Sudanic tribes situated close to the Bantu, such as the Lesé
bordering on the Bira, to adopt the custom, one village at a time.

The major purpose of the *nkumbi*, as stated by the tribes that practice it (I refer mainly to the Forest Bira here), is to fit the youths as men, to make them men in the eyes of the ancestors. A boy who does not undergo the *nkumbi* is denied access to the ancestors after death, and during his life has the status of a child. Boys between the ages of eight and twelve, generally between nine and eleven, are eligible for the ceremony, which now takes place once every three years and lasts for two or more months. The traditional time element has been completely upset by the administration, which, together with the missionaries, has tried to discourage the whole institution. But the *nkumbi* initiation has remained as the only way to achieve adult status within the tribe. I have seen an entire *nkumbi* ceremony, including circumcision, held for a boy who died just prior to being initiated.

C Effectively the *nkumbi* also unites a few neighboring villages as a
881 single political unit, and affords an opportunity though the system
628 of *karé* blood brotherhood, of cementing specific political bonds. It
182 also effectively unites those tribes who practice circumcision in op-
[608] position to those who do not practice it, and it determines certain
lines of marriage prohibition.

C One such line, of course, divides the circumcised from the uncir-
881 cumcised, and theoretically marriage between a Bira and a Lesé would
608 be unthinkable. The only cases known to me allegedly happened dur-
582 ing war, captive women being taken as wives. But equally theoretically
P these prohibitions should apply to the Mbuti who, according to the
• 881 practice of their *kpara*, not having any of their own, either do or do
608 not suffer circumcision at village hands. As we shall see, however,
582 forest territorial organization is no respecter of village tribalism, and
*177 band composition is fluid, to say the least. Consequently, in any one
[621] band one can by no means be sure that all the men are circumcised,
and the question is never raised. Further than that, there is no objection to marriage, among the Mbuti, between a family whose *kpara* circumcises and one whose *kpara* does not. Such marriages would cer-

tainly not be countenanced by the *kpara* concerned. This is only one indication of the lack of respect with which the Mbuti view the *nkumbi*, and it is important that this be understood at the outset. The structural implications of the *nkumbi* as they apply to the villagers in no way apply to the Mbuti. I had graphic evidence of this when following recently initiated Mbuti youths back to their forest hunting camp at the conclusion of the two-month ceremony. They had just been acclaimed as men by the villagers, and allowed to take their place as men in the village *baraza*, or meeting place. But their first act on entering the hunting camp was to sit on the laps of their mothers as an indication that they still considered themselves as children in the forest world. I might further mention that the Mbuti, who in the forest consecrate every activity of major importance with a special type of song, have no song whatsoever for the occasion of the *nkumbi*. Further arguments are given elsewhere (Turnbull, 1957[2]). Here we are concerned with villager attempts to secure control, and it is only necessary to indicate the two different attitudes to the *nkumbi*, and its evidently different significance for the Mbuti in the forest world.

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However the Mbuti might deny the village attitude to the *nkumbi*, and the villagers are aware that such denial does take place, the villagers nonetheless see a number of advantages accruing to them in their admission of the Mbuti to the tribal initiation ceremony.

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First, as the *nkumbi* fits a youth to go to the ancestors after death, the ceremony serves as an introduction of the Mbuti to the afterworld of the village. By undergoing the *nkumbi* they equally are fitted to go, after death, to the world of the village ancestors. But it is made plain throughout that the status relationship remains unchanged. Mbuti and village boys are circumcised alternately on the day of the cutting, which opens the ceremony proper. The Mbuti boy is generally sent first—"to clean the knife"—and throughout he is made, in innumerable ways, to recognize that in village eyes he is inferior to the village boys.

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KARÉ

The pairs of boys, one Mbuti and one villager, whose blood has been allowed to mingle, are called *karé*. The degree of formality with which the *karé* relationship is solemnized varies considerably from village to village, and depends to some extent upon the proportion of Mbuti

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2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

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ties to villagers, and villager supernatural sanctions enforce fulfillment.

From the Mbuti point of view, however, the whole *nkumbi* is *mbafu* (stupid) and *bulé* (empty), and so are the sanctions. The initiates and their "fathers" who attend them during the ceremony take every opportunity to mock the procedure (Turnbull, 1957[2]), and as stated earlier the *nkumbi* in no way alters the status of the initiates back in their forest world, where they are still regarded as children. In all the *nkumbi* that I have witnessed in different parts of the forest, among different tribes, with varying proportions of Mbuti/Villager initiates, and under divers degrees of severity of village control, I have not seen one indication of genuine respect or belief on the part of the Mbuti, and not one instance of the initiation having the slightest structural relationship to the Mbuti forest world.

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Yet by undergoing the *nkumbi* the Mbuti place themselves in a position of ritual inferiority and subordination to the villagers. They do not have any ritual specialists of their own to perform the *nkumbi*, so are wholly dependent upon the village doctors. As the *nkumbi* only perpetuates the status differential, it gives the Mbuti knowledge of tribal lore but does not grant them access to mastery of the lore. Not being full kin, but only adopted, parallel kin, the Mbuti can never qualify as ritual specialists, and are therefore at once forced by the *nkumbi* into participation in innumerable other tribal rituals, and at the same time denied any measure of ritual control and placed in a position of still greater dependence upon the villagers.

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Once again the villagers cannot conceive of life without the necessary ritual observations, and in a sense they feel an obligation to provide these services for the Mbuti, but the Mbuti avoids actual dependence by adopting only the outer form of the institution, not the system. Insofar as we are discussing the village world, however, from the villager's point of view the *nkumbi* places the Mbuti in the greatest possible condition of dependence by creating an obligation to take part in a ritual life in which he will need village ritual specialists. It also provides the villagers with the surest method of control, through supernatural sanctions. The villagers have such belief in these sanctions that they are content to allow the Mbuti to get away with much trickery, convinced that sooner or later the score will be evened and restitution made.

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Having drawn the Mbuti into the world of the village supernatural, because it *is* of the village, the villagers feel they have established ultimate if not immediate control.

P ultimate if not immediate control. It is more difficult to see what the
*177 Mbuti get out of it, except for certain economic advantages which
796 are meant to be reciprocal. Looking at it briefly from the Mbuti point
517 of view, however, we see that the advantages are perhaps more real
182 than those accruing to the villagers. For the villagers are bound by
P [608] their own sanctions, and therefore the Mbuti can make demands of
P his *karé* with reasonable assurance that they will be met. Also, he
[608] can now expect a succession of relatively lavish ceremonies to be pre-
[571] pared for him as he goes through life, at the expense of his *karé* and
kpara. The feasting involved may seem a trivial gain for the Mbuti,
but in fact it is one of their major sources of entertainment and relaxa-
P tion. The *nkumbi* extends the Mbuti's economic and political hori-
[881] zons just as it does those of the villagers, and the Mbuti know how
to reap the advantages, just as they know how to avoid most of the
disadvantages. This avoidance in fact forms one of the important
features of the over-all structure of their society.

C One final advantage that should be mentioned, though its im-
563 portance is perhaps more personal than social, is that only by partici-
881 pation in the *nkumbi*, or its equivalent among tribes with other
885 forms of initiation into manhood, can the Mbuti become a man in the
P eyes of the villagers. There is a strongly paternalistic attitude held by
186 villagers toward their Mbuti that is resented by the hunters, who
*177 consider themselves more manly than the villagers. The *nkumbi* at
881 least offers them an opportunity for proving their manliness to the
885 villagers, and it sometimes develops into a contest between the Mbuti
and the village initiates. And only by participation in the *nkumbi*
can the Mbuti acquire the right to be addressed as adults, admitted to
the adult *baraza*, and accorded other adult privileges when in the
village.

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ELIMA

881 The villagers do not attempt to exert supernatural control through
P the women, as they do through the men. While the Mbuti men have
881 nothing comparable to the *nkumbi* initiation of the villagers, the Mbuti women, in the forest world, do have a recognizable and formal way of acknowledging the puberty of a girl. They give it the same name as the villagers (the Bira call it *elima*, the Lesé *peipa*) and in its outer form it appears roughly similar; the occasion at least is the same,

the first appearance in a girl of menstrual blood. But there the similar- C 881
ity ends.

Be that as it may, the villagers do not take nearly as much interest P 881 •
in the puberty of the Mbuti girls as they do in the puberty of the
boys. The Mbuti generally seem to hold part of their *elima* festivals C 881
in the forest, and the closing part in the village. In this way they are P 881
able to pursue their own way through the festival without interfer- 177*
ence, claiming a feast at village expense only when the forest festival is virtually ended. Village interest in the *elima* while it is in the forest is not manifest in any practical way, although a particularly fond *kpara's* wife might send out an occasional gift of plantains or manioc. But when the *elima* moves to the village there is invariably some conflict, because the closing phase of the Mbuti *elima* is particularly untraditional in the eyes of the villagers (as well it might be, for in fact it is probably a totally different tradition) and offensive to their tribal lore. In particular in recent years, there has been a tendency for Mbuti girls to imitate the boy's *nkumbi*, of which they are supposed to know almost nothing. They display an intimate knowledge of the most jealously guarded secrets, and there have been, throughout the Ndaka and Bira tribal areas, instances of *elima* girls adopting both the costumes of the boy initiates and some of their behavior.

In 1958 the Epulu band went so far that both the Bira and the C
Ndaka chiefs and ritual specialists joined in complaint, and threat- 881
ened the *elima* girls (the two candidates and their companions, 754 626
known jointly as the *bamelima*) with a death curse if they did not P
desist. The girls were upset because they claimed that they had merely 881
adopted the boys' costume because it was so much prettier than the 832 *
traditional costume approved by villagers for village *elima* girls. And 177
was not the whole idea to look pretty? Of course from the village point of view the whole idea was to behave as one defiled, and this is one of several indications of the total difference between the two attitudes to the event of puberty.

We shall see that the Mbuti attitude is that a girl's first menstrual P 881
period is an indication of her readiness for motherhood, and is there- 832
fore a time for great and public rejoicing (see Turnbull, 1960[1]). It 177*
is also a time when boys and girls should get together and think about settling down in marriage, so it is a time for experimentation. The girls are expected, during the last stages of the festival, to look their best at all times, and they paint and decorate and dress themselves to

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881 excellent effect. They flaunt themselves in public, to the increased
832 dismay of the villagers.

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The villagers regard the appearance of menstrual blood as a disas-
C ter, and as the inauguration of a time of great danger for the girl,
881 her family and, by extension, the whole tribe. She is considered as
[783] unclean, and is rigorously secluded and abased. Her family has to
undertake a series of purification rituals ending in a feast (the part
of the ceremony for which the Mbuti solicit "help"). They also have
to discover the cause of the blood, which is believed by the Plains
Bira and still by a number of the Forest Bira to be due to intercourse.
The girl is questioned as to who caused the blood, and she names
the youth on whom she has set her heart. He may acknowledge the
blame, whether or not he ever had intercourse with her, and can then
resolve the unclean situation by marrying her. If his wishes are other-
wise he can deny her accusation and she will have to try elsewhere.
The girl's parents will guide her accusations as they think necessary,
but the actual extent to which the village *elima* leads thus directly
C into marriage seems to vary. Sometimes it is sufficient to secure ad-
783 mission of guilt and payment in lieu of marriage. But the villagers sel-
881 dom try to follow an Mbuti *elima* through its full course; their major
P concern is that the impurity of the *elima* girls should not touch them.
881 The provision of the final feast gives them an opportunity, which
*177 they do not always take, for supervising the ritual purification of the
[296] girls by bathing, the cleansing of the *elima* house, and the ritual dis-
posal of all clothing and bedding and utensils used by the *bamelima*.
The latter they do generally supervise, as the Mbuti are notoriously
loath to part with perfectly good clothing or bedding for such *bulé*
reasons, and will try to avoid having them destroyed.

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If anything, the *elima* sets the villagers and the Mbuti apart, rather
648 than offering any means for drawing them closer together. This is
881 perhaps because while the *nkumbi* involves the village ancestors and
776 is in honor of them, and secures their blessing, the village *elima* in-
769 volves malevolent spirits more than it involves the ancestors. And as
182 far as the villagers are concerned, evil spirits emanate from the forest.
P
648 The *elima* offers no opportunity to the villagers for placing Mbuti
girls under the control of the ancestral spirits; at the most, it offers
them a responsibility for freeing them from contamination by the
evil spirits. They sometimes voice the opinion that the Mbuti are in
league with those spirits emanating from the forest, and rigorously
avoid any contact with an Mbuti *elima*.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

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The molimo trumpet, which is the Mbuti counterpart of the villager *tele*, may be heard growling in a noncommittal manner, as if uncertain which clan totem to imitate from the diversity of clans undoubtedly represented at the Mbuti *molimo* fire. It seems that the most common sound for the instrument to make under such circumstances is the growl of a leopard, which safely covers all clans, Mbuti and villager.

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However, the villagers are not made welcome, and if it were any but the *kpara* or his representative the *molimo* would be abandoned the moment a villager approached. As it is, on the few occasions when I have seen a *kpara* attend, he was not offered any food or any other inducement to stay, the *molimo* trumpet remained out of sight the whole time and only growled indistinctly once or twice; the singing was sporadic and only the young men were active, dancing around the fire.

The Mbuti said that the villagers were afraid and would not in any case be likely to come near; the *kpara* only did it because he felt obliged to. In all cases of which I have any experience, except two instances where a brief *molimo* was held in a village camp for an Mbuti child who died there, the Mbuti *molimo* is held at nighttime in the forest, where interference from the village would be unthinkable. As with the *elima*, however, the closing stages are often held in the village, this being meant to coincide with the end of the official period of mourning and therefore the signal for a feast to be supplied by the villagers.

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It does seem significant, nonetheless, that the Mbuti should sing any *molimo* songs in the village camp, for normally they refuse to sing any of their true forest songs when in the village. However, they are sung infrequently, with marked restraint, and widely separated by long snatches of songs that I never heard in the forest or, unfortunately, in the villages. The latter bore a distinct resemblance to certain songs taught during the *nkumbi*, and some were undoubtedly variants on *nkumbi* songs. The only information I could get was they were not "songs of the forest" but were "songs of the village." The villagers confirmed that they heard the Mbuti sometimes singing village *molimo* songs, and surprise was expressed that they would sing anything else, for everything else was *bulú*, empty.

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The connection between the *molimo*, as performed by the Mbuti in the village, and the *nkumbi* was made all the more evident when on one *molimo* occasion the two members of the *kpara's* family stood up and performed a dance only seen otherwise in the initiation camp.

C
On another occasion the *kpara* himself did exactly the same thing. In 765
the first instance the *kpara* was Ndaka, in the second, Bira. The villagers 881
evidently believe that whatever *molimo* ritual the Mbuti have, 563
it was learned from the village, if badly learned and performed with 535
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illegitimate variations. As with the *elima*, perhaps also for fear of 765
exposure to the malevolent forest spirits, the villagers do not seek to 881 •
interfere too much with Mbuti *molimo* celebrations. We shall see 535 177*
that these celebrations are quite divorced from the village *molimo*,
regardless of whether or not the origin of the two was common. Also,
we shall see that the Mbuti *molimo* has none of the connections that
evidently exist between the village *molimo* and the *nkumbi*.

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As with the *elima*, the villagers limit the extent of their interest 765
to ensuring the removal, by village-supplied procedure, of the last 783
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taints of uncleanliness. This they do, again in conjunction with a 765
feast, turning a blind eye to the fact that as many as a dozen different 614
Mbuti "clans" may be represented at what is supposed to be a closed
clan feast.

C
The extent to which the villagers believe they assert supernatural 563
control over the Mbuti does not coincide at all with the extent to 829
which they effectively do exert such control, for the reason that must 121
now be sufficiently obvious; no matter how many or what manner 648
of village institutions the Mbuti adopt, they are adopted into a pre-
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existing system and no longer have the same interrelationships they 177*
do in the village system. The two systems are kept irreconcilably apart 648
by what has in effect been emerging throughout—the existence of 121
two completely different sets of values.

Yet the villagers are not entirely victims of their own *mbafu*, as
the Mbuti would have it. There is little else they could do, and the
adoption of the Mbuti into one aspect of village social structure
would indeed be *bulé* without their adoption into the total structure.
C
The villagers are consistent and logical, and above all it must be
remembered that in their own eyes they have achieved what they set [626]
out to achieve—control. They believe that ultimate control is theirs [776]
because of the force of the supernatural powers on their side, and in
point of fact, although it does not work quite the way they think,
the concept of supernatural power does give them a small measure
of control to the extent that it creates fear.

But what is also achieved is the creation of a myth that completely regularizes the whole situation, as far as the villagers are concerned, affording them an institutionalized means of dealing with every possi-

entrance to his hut so that it no longer looked directly at Amabosu's, 361
which would have been taken as indicating extreme intimacy, but 621
instead faced narrowly across to the hut of his wife's uncle (C), 613
Masisi; Masisi's son's wife (D), who was not only kin to Ekianga's 593
young wife but close friends with her, promptly added to her hut, 595
despite her husband's protests, and faced it boldly toward Ekianga. Ekianga's young wife, Kamaikan, responded the next day by facing her hut in the direction of her friend, at the same time deflecting it away from her co-wife's hut, Arobanai (A), next door. Arobanai had on the day of her arrival made an addition facing toward Kamaikan as a conciliatory gesture, but in face of this rebuff she turned the entrance of her hut away again. Meanwhile Masisi's lineal cousin, Manyalibo, made no effort to enter the dispute, but rather turned slightly toward the rest of the camp. Masisi contented himself with completing the entrance to his hut on the second day, leaving it facing the way it was. An extension he built several days later, as did [881] •
Ausu, was merely to provide separate accommodation for young girls who were approaching puberty.

In the rest of the camp similar petty jealousies and hostilities 361
brought about similar clusterings. Njobo (W-1A), for instance, was 157
an unusually dominating personality, and was consequently accorded, 554
or took, the position of *capita*, representing the band in all matters 578
concerning the village. But he was unwise enough to try and assert 621
the same authority in the forest, and the over-all layout of the camp shows clearly how he and his sister's son, Asuku (W-3A), whom he favored, were ostracized. His wife Masamba (X) built my hut for me, [122]
as women sometimes do for adult bachelor kinsmen, to one side, and another hut for strangers on the other side. Maipé (G), the son of another of Njobo's sisters, was the only one to allow his hut to remain facing toward Njobo. After Njobo had left, Nikiabo (H) joined the camp and Masamba built his hut for him, facing toward her own, saying she needed a friend. Makubasi (U), a prominent hunter and a member of the same clan as Njobo, but of a different lineage, turned his hut away on the second day, isolating Njobo in the middle of the *clearing. At this, Njobo and his nephew, Asuku, joined their huts together*, using only one entrance facing across to Njobo's other nephew, Maipé. When Makubasi's father, Tungana (T), arrived on the third day, he built his hut so that one entrance nominally faced toward Njobo, but it was generally covered and the other entrance faced clearly into the southwestern section of the camp.

[P. 108-K]

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14. The nkumbi initiation is another means by which villagers attempt to control the Mbuti. The initial dance here, with the sacred makata sticks, is led by the traditional doctor, Sabani, at the village of Eboyo. Mbuti and villagers take part jointly in the festivities, but the Mbuti are excluded from all ritual roles.

[R 108-L]

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15. Village women of Epulu dance to celebrate an approaching *nkumbi* during which only Mbuti boys will be initiated, owing to lack of village boys of the right age.

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[152]

16. A boy, just circumcised, is comforted by an Mbuti hunter. This would be considered a lasting shame by either a village boy or an adult, but the Mbuti see no shame in acknowledging and healing pain.

888 hunter may initiate the action. Thus the *elima* and the *molimo*, which
627 are crisis festivals, are initiated by the hunters, but it is the elders who
578 control them and give them their spiritual quality. It is the elders who
• [881] act not only as arbiters between the members of the band, but be-
[765] tween the band and the forest, between this life and the next. Even in the most ordinary run of everyday life there is seldom a day that does not demand from one elder or another, man or woman, some opinion that will be couched in terms like "such and such is good for (or pleasing to) the forest," or "this makes my spirit (*roho*) feel good."

621 The greatest departures from daily life occur when the band visits
*177 the village, or when a villager visits the band. In either case it is as
512 though the whole social structure of the Mbuti were suddenly changed. A single individual becomes, all at once, a chief. Age groups break up and nuclear families come to the fore. The only central fire will be that of the "chief." But as this is not part of the forest world, exceptions occur within the forest context only rarely. There is sel-
621 dom any disaster such as the invasion of a camp by elephant, though
731 it happens sometimes. Hunting is generally more than adequate
512 throughout the year. But though hunger does sometimes come to the Mbuti, starvation is unknown. Sickness is not uncommon, but is rarely serious. Throughout the year daily life goes its usual way interrupted only by major, inevitable crises of the life cycle.

844 BIRTH

Birth is the first crisis of life, and among the Mbuti it is, as else-
[165] where, not without its attendant dangers. Though no statistics are available, it is the opinion of villagers and Mbuti, and of many Europeans, doctors and otherwise, who know both communities, that infant mortality is appreciably less among the Mbuti, and sterility
[164] less common. This may be due to the fact that their relative isolation has defended the Mbuti against the venereal diseases widespread among the villagers. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the Mbuti evidently feel less need for concern at childbirth. This applies
844 to both the nuclear family and to the band. There is absolutely no
621 formal recognition on the part of the band, and only the barest of interest. Considering the fluid and nonlineal composition of the band this is not surprising, particularly since, for this type of band, birth is only one form of recruitment, and by no means the most sure or

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

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PUBERTY: THE *ELIMA*

881 At the next crisis in the life cycle, however, it is the band rather
621 than the nuclear family that takes charge. By early childhood the child has already grown away from its family to some extent, and become more a member of an age group cutting across kinship lines. At puberty the boy or girl may not even be living with kin any more, let alone in the nuclear family. But even if they are, the band takes control of the situation. It is an occasion that concerns the band as such, for adolescence leads into marriage, and marriage will inevitably bring about a significant change in the economic structure of the band. A member of the band may leave it, or a new member may join it, or, if the marriage is within the band, then at least there will still be an additional net, and a change in the hunting and gathering pattern and perhaps in interfamily alliances. The process of fission and
P fusion might also be affected by the political implications of the mar-
881 riage. The *elima* is best regarded as a premarital festival. It does not necessarily lead directly into a marriage that is marriage in the sense of a final, childbearing union. It is rather a preparation for marriage,
P an opportunity for the youngsters to find suitable partners. It does
[524] not even have to end in betrothal, so there cannot be said to be a
[182] functional connection between *elima* and marriage.

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881 The arrival at puberty among boys being somewhat less easy to determine, the signal for an *elima* is the first appearance of menstrual blood in a young girl. This is something that fills the local villagers with horror, and with fear of evil influences against which they take elaborate ritual precautions to protect themselves. These precautions are costly and inconvenient, and the girl who has brought both shame and annoyance to her family is hidden and treated harshly. There are elaborate cleansing ceremonies for the girl and her family.
P Among the Mbuti, however, the appearance of menstrual blood is a
881 sign that the girl is now a potential mother, and it is consequently
P a signal for rejoicing and for preparation for motherhood. Thus an
[524] integral part of the festival is the selection of suitable potential husbands. Such selection demands that the boys prove their manhood, since it cannot be proven as simply as is the womanhood of the girl. In this sense, then, the *elima* is a joint initiation of boys and girls into adulthood. Having dealt with it in descriptive form elsewhere (Turn-

bull, 1960[1]), I shall keep the description here to those essentials 881
concerned with the structural implications of the *elima*.

The fact that it is not an individual family affair, to be concealed
with shame as best possible, is doubly emphasized when two girls in
a band, of quite different lineages, "see the blood" within a few days
of each other. There will then be a joint *elima*. And there is also the
selection by the girl or girls of the *bamelima*, the friends she likes and
wants to accompany her for the duration of the festival, living with
her in the *elima* hut. They will be drawn from her female age mates, [561]
and may or may not already have had their own *elima*. If they have
not yet seen the blood, participation in their friend's *elima* will excuse
them from having one of their own when the time comes. If a girl
sees the blood, and a close friend thinks she is about to see it as well,
the *elima* will be delayed, perhaps for several weeks.

As with birth, this life-cycle crisis does not evoke any sense of need 881
for urgent ritual action, protective or otherwise. Its significance is of 182
a different order. It is regarded as essentially natural and therefore
good. Also as with birth, the personal importance of the occasion [778]
leads to an establishment of personal contact with the forest, a reification
of the direct bond between the individual and the forest world;
but the social importance of puberty for the band is recognized, so the
band as such takes certain measures, both social and ritual, to mark
the occasion.

The girl or girls with blood are expected to keep to their homes and 881
an extension may be built onto one of their huts, or onto that of
any friend or relative who is willing to house the *bamelima*. Every
elima girl with blood has to choose a personal assistant, and the
choice is left entirely to her, and again may fall on a relative, though
more often it is a very close friend, of the same age group. They then
invite other friends to join them in the *elima* hut, when it is ready.
The assistants share such restrictions as are placed upon the *elima*
girls, except that they are more free to leave the hut unaccompanied.
There are few restrictions anyway, it seems, and they are mainly concerned
with maintaining adherence to the schedule of instruction and
activities. There are some minor food prohibitions, based on the 881
personal taboos of the *elima* girls and their assistants, which in turn 262
are based on their individual reactions to these foods as young children.
If a certain food makes a child sick it may be forbidden to him
until puberty, when he may try it again and abandon the taboo if it
no longer affects him adversely. Sometimes, but not always, there is 881

• 881 an injunction against eating meat, and this seems to be when the *elima* activities are affecting the hunt and the supply of game.

The rest of the *bamelima* are merely expected to be in attendance, and come and go as they please.

In the very lack of restrictions we can see that the Mbuti do not regard the *bamelima* to be in any ritual condition of danger or impurity. At such times as they are free to be among other band members in the camp they behave perfectly normally, playing with young children, fondling babies, sitting by family hearths, and so forth. But they eat separately and wash separately, so we might say that at least they are in a condition of ritual respect.

881 864 867 To begin with, the *bamelima* spend most of their time either inside the hut or else off with an instructress, in the forest. Inside the hut they are taught the songs of the *elima* by any older women who care to take part in the instruction. In the forest, I was told by a number of women, young and old, the girls are instructed in the arts of motherhood. This presumably includes such aspects of sexual life as are still unknown to them, which are probably few, but also use of the various herbs and treatments that a woman must know to insure fertility, an abundance of milk, easy childbirth, and abortion if necessary.

881 533 Girls say that certain of the *elima* songs are taught them in the forest rather than in the hut, and as the festival progresses less and less time is spent in the hut, and more in the forest. For the festival is said "to rejoice the forest," to make it happy and glad. If the girls are not singing well they are told the forest will be displeased. If they are dejected they are asked if they want the forest to be sad. Everyone is expected to be happy, and as the *bamelima* go through the forest they sing to it. As with so many of the other songs of the Mbuti, the *elima* songs are either wordless, being just plays on vowel sounds, or else the words are slight and without any evident significance, such as "Ibu is a dog," "Let's get leaves," and "Oh, the mud!" Other songs sung by the *bamelima* toward the end of the festival, when they sing in public in the camp, are rather different, making rather more sense and being distinctly spicy in nature.

But the songs that are considered as true *elima* songs and which conform to a musical style of their own, are evidently sacred. When they are sung in the forest, they are sung *to* the forest. A phrase is cast at the forest and an echo is awaited before the girls continue. Even an individual girl, usually the one with blood, will sing in this

way to the forest. If the *elima* happens to be in a village camp, as it 881 •
sometimes is for part of its duration, the girls will still go away off 533
into the forest to sing their songs. The older men and women say that [177]
the festival should be held entirely in the forest, but the younger Mbuti point out that it is an occasion for rejoicing and feasting, and so it is much better to be near a village and eat off the villagers. Even when doing that, however, one is likely to come across broken saplings stuck in the ground alongside a trail many hours from the village camp, showing that the *bamelima* passed by there, "rejoicing the forest." Sometimes they may be heard in their peculiar antiphony with the forest, at other times the saplings appear swiftly and silently a few yards from an Mbuti youth as a sign that the *bamelima* are nearby and should not be disturbed. Sometimes youths, thinking they have left the *bamelima* safely in their hut in a village camp, are hours off in the forest in their usual boisterous, noisy way, and will find themselves attacked and chased by the girls, armed with sticks and whips.

Usually the girls are all together, but every now and then one of the 881
elima girls and her assistant will go off together into the forest, and stay there for half a day or more. At such times the others sit around looking dejected, and complain of being deserted. The older women then say that they should not complain, that it is good for the girl to go away sometimes and "converse with the forest."

As at birth, there is a certain amount of decoration of the body 881
with what might be considered as forest charms, and toward the end 778
of the festival the girls paint each other with a white forest clay. The [302]
personification of the forest, and the frequency with which it is referred to, and the way in which this is done as though its personality were an ordinary matter of fact are another indication of the intense personal importance of the forest in the life of the Mbuti, of its character as a parent, a friend, and a lover, the provider of all things. But it cannot be interpreted as forest worship, for to the Mbuti it is simply a matter of fact.

One thing that is particularly interesting in consideration of the 881
bamelima is that while it is very clearly an age group, it does two 561
things. It does not deny individuality to the *elima* girl, who in fact is 571
constantly displaying it and often causing friction as a result, but it 866
effectively consolidates an age group that might otherwise have been 182
rather lacking in cohesion. Girl's activities are, on the whole, less co-operative in nature than those of boys, and whereas boys are clearly formed into co-operative groups before arriving at puberty, this is not

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561 quite so with the girls. But by the end of the festival bonds have been
571 forged between the *bamelima* that will never be broken and that will
836 provide a firm basis for co-operative activity throughout their lives.

182 The other thing achieved is that there seems to be at least a tem-
881 porary obliteration of the bonds of the nuclear family. The nuclear
594 family has no particular responsibility toward the festival, though
836 they will generally contribute more food than others and may offer
182 shelter, and it has absolutely no authority. Further, although relations between brother and sister are free at all times, it is worth noting that in the *elima* house the girls sleep with the boys of their choice openly and without shame, though their own brothers may be among the boys sleeping with other girls beside them. It is difficult, however, to determine whether or not sexual intercourse, which is permissible at this time, openly takes place under such conditions. I am told that it does.

881 Neither do kinship considerations seem to play any important role,
602 and certainly no predetermined role, in the instruction of the girls. The only roles that are distinguishable as such are the provider of the *elima* hut, the mother of the *elima*, the father of the *elima*, the assistants and the rest of the *bamelima*.

881 Of these, the *bamelima* are without question an age group with no
561 kinship considerations. The assistants are primarily close friends and
571 confidantes of the *elima* girls, and seem likely to be related distantly,
602 but there are no stated preferences concerning this. It is said that the
[578] father of the *elima* does not have to be a relative at all; his job is to use force, if necessary, to stop the somewhat violent altercations that break out among the attendant youths or between them and the *bamelima*. It is said that the mother of the *elima* is usually an elderly relative of the parental or grandparental level, and that the provider of the hut can be anyone willing to put up with the noise. Table 7a shows the kin relationship between these various roles and the *elima* girls in an *elima* held among the Epulu Mbuti at the end of 1957 and into the beginning of 1958. It also shows the relationship of those senior girls who took the most prominent part in the instruction of the *bamelima*. Tables 7b–d show the same relationships on three other occasions among other net-hunting bands.

881 Instruction, as already mentioned, is in song, and in such of the
86 arts of motherhood as are yet unknown to the girls. The instructors,
[561] apart from the mother of the *elima*, are senior members of the same generation as the *bamelima*, and mostly married, or else they are el-

ders. Like the "mother," their role is also that of chaperone, however, 881 •
for the second most important activity, after song, is the selection of 86
and sleeping with lovers. 561

Sexual experimentation is certainly a major element in the *elima*, 881
but it is combined with a very definite move to widen the social hori- 864
zons of the girls, and to direct their attentions into what the parental 867
and grandparental generations consider proper directions. There are [836]
also certain rules about intercourse in the *elima* hut. The senior girls,
or instructors, and the "mother" guide the *bamelima* in all this. Their
decisions are never questioned, and never discussed by the rest of the
band. It is not until the latter stages of the festival that the parental
generation takes an active part in the proceedings.

The widening of horizons is achieved by taking the girls to visit 881
neighboring bands. On such visits they may stay for only a day, or for 136
several nights, depending on whether the girls find suitable lovers. It [574]
is considered important by everyone that the *elima* house should be
a place of what is best translated as enthusiastic lovemaking. At first
it is modest in scale, and, depending on the composition of the band,
is likely to take place early on and within the ordinary hunting camp.
The boys who will enter the *elima* hut will be the younger ones, not
likely to be serious suitors. They may enter only if they are invited by
a girl, and the girl is forbidden to invite anyone related to her on her [835]
father's side or closely related on her mother's side. Effectively that
means any descendant of the father's father or of the mother's mother;
the children of any of the father's brothers or sisters or half brothers
or half sisters, and the children of any of the mother's full brothers
or sisters. Invitation is made by the girl, who whips the boy of her
choice. The girls come out of their hut at regular intervals, during the
day to begin with, armed with pliable young saplings. They seek out
and soundly beat whatever boys lawfully take their fancy, if they can
catch them.

Any boy so whipped is under an obligation, whether he likes it or not, to enter the *elima* hut later that day. When he does so he is subject to a further beating by the *bamelima*, and even then may not be invited to sleep with the girl who first selected him. Unless she gives him permission, he may not sleep with her. And if she allows him to lie with her, he again has to have her permission before intercourse can take place. The men say that once they lie down with a girl, however, if they want her they take her by surprise, when petting her, and force her to their will.

• 881 In intercourse the only restriction I could discover was some rather
836 vaguely stated prohibition on a boy holding his partner in his arms.
833 Some adults say that this prevents conception, others say that the
842 girls take contraceptive medicines. Whatever the reason, there is no
documented or even reported case of pregnancy arising out of intercourse in an *elima* hut.

881 The *elima* is given wide publicity (unlike the villager practice) and
836 young men from neighboring bands are expected to come and participate.
[574] If they are whipped during a visit to their band by the *bamelima*, then they are obliged to return the visit. The latter part of the
[584] festival is the time when prospective suitors are sought, though there
is still no feeling that betrothal must necessarily result. At this time
even the younger married men may enter the *elima* hut, though they
will sleep with the senior girls rather than with the *bamelima*. It is
nothing unusual for the husband of the provider of the house to do
this, nor for an elder brother of one of the *elima* girls themselves. But
at this time the younger boys are kept out.

881 Access to the hut may still be had by being whipped, but now there
152 is an additional possibility. In the late afternoons the mothers gather
584 outside the hut, with their carrying baskets, and with a good supply
of sticks and stones and any other suitable ammunition. Any youth
that wishes to declare his affection for one of the girls is free to attempt to enter the hut, but he must run the gauntlet of the women,
who are perfectly capable of beating him soundly and even of throwing him in a river if they do not consider him suitable. Depending
upon how well they favor him they will let him pass with anything
from token to stiff resistance. If the resistance is stiff the suitor may
use his bow and fire fruit peel or small pebbles with it, and fight the
women back in this way. When the women become particularly aggressive the youths make a combined attack.

Minor injuries are frequently sustained, and the Mbuti say that in the old days the "war" used to be real, with arrows used instead of peelings. The important thing is that it is still impossible for a youth to enter the *elima* hut, at this stage of the festival, if the older women decide against it for any reason.[9]

881 Once inside he still has to face the girls, and the same conditions as
584 before pertain except that if he is allowed to sleep with a girl and

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[583] [9] The drama not only appears like a reenactment of the proverbial "marriage by capture," but some Mbuti say that they used to have to fight and carry off their brides in this manner.

have intercourse with her, he must then stay in the *elima* hut until the 881
end of the festival, and he will be considered as her betrothed. There 584
is no doubt that the girls are, like their mothers, anxious to find suitable lovers who may become their betrothed, and it would indeed only be a particularly flirtatious girl who did not hope that her *elima* would end in betrothal. During the first weeks the girls have ample [836]
opportunity for experimentation, and it may be assumed that such experimentation began even before the festival began. But in the last [832]
two weeks they are looking for a future husband, and they take great pains to paint their bodies and make themselves beautiful for their evening appearances outside the *elima* hut.

These occasions are formal presentations of the girls as adults. For 881
the first time they sing the *elima* songs and dance before the entire 832
band, and for the first time the youths who are considered as suitable 533
candidates sit together and join in the singing with the girls. Each youth will try to catch the attention of the girl of his choice, and each girl will try to respond, but the occasion is a serious one, and the mothers, who sit with the girls and separate them from the youths, sharply reprove anyone who is caught flirting. When the singing is over, the girls are shepherded back into their hut, and unless they come out in an attack with their whips, no boy may enter.

The length of the festival is anything from one to two months, 881
and it ends without regard to the successful betrothal or otherwise 783
of the *elima* girls. The girls are taken to a nearby stream in the early 515
hours of one morning, and wash themselves carefully a number of times. I have heard them refer to this as "washing the blood," but this is also a village expression for the ritual purification of a menstruating woman, and it is impossible to be sure of the exact significance of the term for the Mbuti until more material is available. The washing, however, is unlike that of village ritual washing, being completely informal, the *elima* girls washing together with all the others, eating and drinking in between sessions of swimming and splashing and playing in the water. When it is over they return to the camp, rub their bodies with oil, sing and dance in public as much or as little as they like and without adult supervision. They continue to stay together throughout the day as a group, but in the evening they disperse to their individual homesteads. For the next few days this is repeated, without the washing, and then the camp returns to normal.

If a betrothal has been effected, the boy will wait for a suitable op- 584
portunity, then make the proper approach to the girl's parents, asking

no further, except to point again to the obvious potential relationship 439
between hunting technology and village exchange, the net-hunters 224
being more easily able to acquire an excess of meat than the archers. 433
However, it is difficult to ascertain just how far this relationship is 184
effectual, for even the net-hunters maintain minimal exchange with
the villagers, and only on the same nonformalized individual basis.
There is rather more likelihood among the archers for there to exist a [622
capita or *sultani* who will convey to his fellow-Mbuti the wishes of 621]
the villagers although he has no authority to take any other action,
and this may be seen as being due, in part at least, to the less productive technology of the archers, and in part to the greater prevalence
of fragmentation into small sub-bands.

DIVISION OF LABOR

There is little to say about the division of labor in Mbuti society, 462
but most important is the fact that there is no religious belief or ritual 222
practice that relates any activity to any one sex, nor is there any con- 224
secration of those everyday tasks that normally fall into the jurisdiction of one sex or the other. This, of course, is what might be expected
from the personal terminology, which differentiates the sexes clearly
only at the parental level. Basically men hunt and make hunting [765
equipment, and organize the *molimo* festivals. The women gather 881]
vegetable foods and other forest produce, build the huts, prepare and cook the food; they organize the *elima* festival. Men make bark cloth, women make baskets. Children take part in all the economic activities. But women help make the nets, and they invariably make the twine from which the nets are made. Among the net-hunters the women, girls and young children act as beaters and are thus an integral part of the hunt, as they are among the archers in the archer *begbe* hunt. Men of both archer and net-hunter bands have no hesitation in gathering mushrooms and other vegetable foods when they have the opportunity. In both groups it is primarily and almost exclusively the men who gather the honey, for women seldom climb trees.

Women take part in the *molimo* and, although it is a small part, it 562
is a highly significant one. The *elima*, though organized by the women [765
and stemming from the maturation of a girl, is of equal importance to 881]
the male youths who play a vital role in the festival. All in all, sex does
not seem to be of any particular significance in determining the struc- [433]
ture of Mbuti economic activity. Of far greater significance is age, 561
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it, the children standing guard at the net or at the fringes of the hunt), 224
nonetheless the nuclear family is divided in the hunt, and both men 621
and women are forced to co-operate with their neighbors, who may 626
or may not be kin. The hunt above all is not an individual affair but 594
involves the band as a whole, as is borne out in the ultimate disposition of the spoils.

That the net-hunt is regarded as a matter of importance to the forest, 224
regarding the forest in a religious sense, is evidenced by the hunting 778
fire, the song and the dance, rather than by any elaborate ritual,
purification, or sexual taboo. The close relationship between the
hunt as an economic activity and the hunt as a religious act is seen in [304]
the widespread custom of rubbing ashes from charred forest woods into the skin, sometimes slitting the skin first to achieve permanent tattoo marks. This is stated to secure the protection of the forest.

Whereas I was never able to secure confirmation of Schebesta's description 224
of food offerings being made to the forest, except through 825
villager informants, there is very definitely a strongly felt and stated 152
urge to use every part of the animal, and never to kill more than is [114]
necessary for the band's needs for the day. This in fact may be one [782]
reason why the Mbuti are so reluctant to kill an excess of game and preserve it for exchange with the villagers. There is no expression of joy in the capturing and killing of an animal, though the excitement still runs strongly. The moment of killing is best described as a moment of intense compassion and reverence. The fun that is sometimes subsequently made of the dead animal, particularly by the youths, appears to be almost a nervous reaction, and there is an element of fear in their behavior. On the other hand, a bird caught alive may deliberately be toyed with, its feathers singed off over the fire while it is still fluttering and squawking until it is finally burned or suffocated to death. This again is usually done by youths who take the same nervous pleasure in the act; very rarely a young hunter may absent-mindedly do the same thing. Older hunters and elders generally disapprove, but do not interfere.

The respect seems to be not for animal life but for the game as a 224
gift of the forest, and a gift that may be withheld if abused by waste.
It is further considered that good hunting is essential to the success [881] •
of either an *elima* or a *molimo* festival, and during such festivals certain [765]
hunts are devoted expressly to supplying the festival with food.

Among the archers, the system of sharing game and the respect for 224
game are comparable in their political and religious connotations: 621

593 578 Everyone was tired of disputes in the camp, and they turned on Kengé and told him it was he who was a bad husband. He promptly said, "I shall tell my mother; I shall tell her everything, and she will come here." His mother was notoriously argumentative, and the thought of having another disputant on their hands was too much. There were unanimous shouts of disapproval, whereupon Kengé said, "So you let the Lesé Mbuti join empty Cephu in our territory, Cephu who always hunts against us and should be turned out completely and forever, yet you do not want your own mother-in-law to come and live with you. What kind of Mbuti are you?" He went inside his hut and after a few muffled cries and sounds of blows, there were other sounds, less offensive, and in a half hour or so Kengé and his wife came out together, making a great show of friendliness, peering into Mbaaka's hut and laughing loudly at them for fighting so much.

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DISPUTES CONCERNING TRIVIA

152 A headache, a hungry stomach, a painful leg, a leaking hut or a damp forest—almost any kind of discomfort is likely to make an Mbuti irritable, and he will pick a quarrel with ease and readiness so that he can make his heart feel better, as they say. It is known to be bad to keep things concealed, so there is no particular disgrace in voicing suspicions and revealing antagonisms, particularly if it is done quietly. Few, however, managed to make their heart feel better without creating a great deal of noise and making everyone else feel considerably worse.

578 Most such disputes, and there were likely to be several every day, died as they began, in complete indecision. The following are typical instances:

[524] [881] 26. A small girl, playing in imitation of the boy's *nkumbi*, playfully whipped some of the men, including her uncle, Masalito. Masalito was enraged and hit her, which started a fight between his age mates—that is, the young hunters.

[534] [562] 27. Pepei fought another youth with sticks because the other told him to beat the *banja* sticks, and Pepei said he was not a woman to be ordered around. Tungana's wife then beat Pepei, saying that women do not get ordered around, only children, and that is why nobody will marry him.

[593] 28. Kengé beat his sister because she caught cold.

29. A girl returning from the village related how there was an

C As stated earlier, this relationship may be exceptionally cordial,
563 and will then be maintained even if the Mbuti lineage is removed by
571 a considerable distance from the village of its *kpara*. On the other
177 hand the relationship may be extremely hostile, for if the Mbuti are
P 571 not dealing with their *kpara*, they are certainly dealing with someone
*177 else and this causes a three-way antagonism. The *kpara*, having no
political control over the Mbuti and being unable to apply any effective
economic sanctions, take refuge in their belief in supernatural
sanctions or else employ the local doctor to effect a curse. Their only
hope of practical recompense lies in making a case against the villager
with whom their Mbuti are dealing.

C Insofar as the villages themselves have been tending to become
621 somewhat divided, certain members being sent or simply going elsewhere
613 to work, the situation is aggravated and it is difficult to assess
571 the reasons, precisely, for the noneffectiveness of the interlineage relationship.
P Again the major immediate cause, though not necessarily
621 the reason, is the fluid and composite nature of the Mbuti band, the
613 571 periodic division of which may cut right across lineage divisions.

Karé/Karé

C
608 Male Mbuti individuals are related formally to male village individuals
608 through the institutional *karé* brotherhood. The *nkumbi* initiations
571 which take place periodically (every three years for the past
881 twenty years or so, in the central Ituri) are not confined to individual
177 villages, but draw candidates from a number of villages within the
P same major segment of the tribe. Frequently the *kpara* will try to see
608 that members of their own immediate family are made *karé* to their
571 *177 Mbuti, but this is not always possible, and the *karé* relationship is
•881 liable to cut across the lineage relationship.

It is essentially a brotherhood pact avowing reciprocal obligations
C including and centering around economic exchange. But it is a more
608 intimate relationship than can exist between the Mbuti and their
571 *kpara*, particularly as they are related not only in terms of the knife
177 but also in terms of age. During the period of seclusion in the initiation
P 608 camp, *karé* are always expected to be close to each other, although
571 any attempt of the one to comfort the other will be ridiculed.
*177 They are, however, frequently set tasks to perform jointly, or made
to perform services for each other. A bond is begun with the knife,
and may grow, under these circumstances, into a lasting friendship.
It is because of this friendship, and not because of the knife, that an
Mbuti may well maintain an exchange relationship with his *karé*

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15. Akidinimba celebrates her puberty and her forthcoming marriage during an elima dance.

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16. A young Mbuti mother, Epini, with her infant wrapped in a specially chosen piece of bark cloth. She will freely allow other women to fondle and even nurse her child, and will pass it around for the men to hold and admire.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

P
771 Similarly with the *nkumbi*, the Mbuti see submission as a means of acquiring status,
• 881 which is necessary to them if they are to have any part at all in village
✓177 society. They also see in it, and in witchcraft, a means of defeating
754 the villagers on their own grounds, by proving their superiority. They
571 can do this in the *nkumbi* by being excessively brave, either physically or by flaunting the taboos and thus exposing themselves to super-
C natural sanctions. They can achieve the same end similarly by pre-
[829] tending to be better witches than the villagers, and indeed the villagers often believe this to be the case.[1]

P Nonetheless, the adoption of an institution, for whatever motive,
771 brings a number of results, some of which will inevitably correspond
✓177 to those expected and desired in the original context. This is a reality, a practical experience, and as such cannot help but somewhat alter the attitude of the Mbuti. In this way they may begin to partially believe in village magic or witchcraft or supernatural sanctions, at least insofar as such belief is not contradicted by the rest of their experience. This ambivalence is particularly marked when they are in the village, which is full of the unknown for the Mbuti, and is correspondingly much less pronounced in the forest. It is with this in mind that we should examine the magico-religious practices of the Mbuti, where there seems to be so much borrowing.

P Magic is best defined, for all the tribes in the Ituri region, as the
C manipulation of material objects which in itself is believed to be the
789 direct cause of certain results, with no invocation or spiritual inter-
121 vention. It is essentially a natural and, from the local point of view, scientific procedure, having nothing to do with the supernatural.

C The villagers have recourse to magical acts, so defined, for almost
789 any circumstance over which they have no other form of control, yet
C which does not call for the invocation of supernatural intervention.
[755] Fertility of men, women and land may be secured by such processes, as may protection against thieves and adulterers; the weather may be
C influenced, illness may be cured. If the magic takes the form of an
756 amulet to be worn, it may be secured from the local doctor; if it is
755 something requiring more elaborate manipulation, such manipula-
789 tion is generally considered a professional secret, and certain individ-

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[1] The situation is somewhat analogous to that described by Lévi-Strauss (1955) for the Nambikwara chief who understood the principle of writing as a means of communication, and imitated it in order to heighten his status among his band and to intensify his measure of control. In each case the adoption of the institution was not for its original value, but to strengthen a somewhat precarious position. It is probable that the Nambikwara chief was thinking not only of his relationship with his own band but also of that with the European "band."

778 This was not an isolated instance, though such dancing and singing
535 are generally confined to youths and younger married people. The
158 erotic aspect of the relationship between forest and Mbuti is also seen
778 in the very clear individual preferences for certain types of place in
833 which it is found good to the *roho* to have sexual intercourse, such as
by a stream, or in dark shade, or in a patch of sunlight or moonlight,
or during the hunt, but in the forest rather than in the hut.

771 The perennial certainty of economic sufficiency, the general lack
789 of crisis in their lives, all lead the Mbuti to the conviction that the
[761] forest, regarded as the source of *pepo* and of their whole existence,
[181] is benevolent, and that the natural course of life is good. The absence
of magic is not necessarily an indication of technological mastery; in
this instance it is simply an indication of the normal absence of
crisis. We indicated that such magic as existed was not without its
spiritual aspects, and might possibly be better classified as religion.
778 For instance the use of vine and wooden charms on an infant to convey
[789] the strength of the forest to the child is not thought to achieve
its end directly, by physical transference alone. Physical contact with
these materials is considered strengthening, and certainly the juice
of the vine in which infants are bathed is thought to have strengthening
properties, but these things are also considered "pleasing to the
forest" (*babongisa ndura*). This phrase constantly recurs, and shows
the belief in the awareness by the forest of its "children" and their
needs. Such acts and many others, by physically relating the individual
to the forest, are believed to create an added awareness of the Mbuti
by the forest. It is not only the strength of the forest that is wanted,
but its affection.

778 THE POWER OF SOUND

828 Birth is attended with an undemonstrative concern to establish
533 this relationship between the forest and the individual, and it is reinforced
[844] at puberty by what might also be considered in some respects
[881] as magic, but which is more essentially religious, and that is song.
The mere attachment of a vine to the wrist or around the waist
requires that amount of effort and no more. Song requires continued
effort, is more direct and personal, and consequently more powerful—
its goal is identical. Song above all else is believed to attract the attention
of the forest, and to please it. "Sound is very strong indeed;
noise is bad, but song is good" (*S'uti mota ningo'e, akami sinana'e;*

imba nde bonga'i). The positive emphasis on *ekimi*,[4] or quiet, is in 778 no way thought of as being in conflict with song, for *ekimi* is cool, 822 and so is song, and both are pleasing to the forest. Song is in no way 533 associated with noise, though both are recognized to be sound.

There is no such thing as secular song among the Mbuti. Songs 533 sung by the Mbuti in the village, apart from being quite different in [822] musical form from those sung in the forest, are spoken of as "empty sound" (*s'uti bobo*) or even as "noise." There are distinct musical forms for distinct occasions of importance in forest life such as hunting, honey gathering, puberty and death. The absence of any specific Mbuti form for village events, including *nkumbi* initiation or village-arranged marriages, is an indication of the lack of importance of these events in the forest life of the Mbuti.

There are, apart from the four major types of song listed above, two other types that are less formalized, but which are considered more in the nature of "sound" than "song." One is the lullaby, which is an individual creation (unlike any other forms of song, all of which require group participation), and the other is the play song, accompanying hoop-jumping, skipping or divers other rhythmic games.

Of the four major types, two concern economic activities and are sung on the appropriate occasion, each involving men and women. The other two are more directly religious in nature, being concerned 533 with puberty and death, though the field of each is somewhat wider 881 than these precise moments in the life cycle. The puberty songs (which have nothing to do with the *nkumbi*, not being sung on that occasion and in no way resembling the village songs that *are* sung at that time) concern primarily the women and youths (male and female), and are first learned and sung at puberty but may be sung at other times similarly critical to growth, birth and marriage. (Normally [844] *elima* songs, or puberty songs, are sung at birth only if there is some [585] special concern over the child's welfare, and at marriage only if it is desired to consecrate an otherwise "empty" marriage taking place in the village. Then not only is an *elima* song sung but leaves are brought in from the forest, and the bridal couple are completely surrounded by them to indicate that they are, in fact, joining together in the forest.)

Death songs are normally sung at the death of an adult, male or 000

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[4] *Ekimi* is the word most frequently used in this band for quiet. Like many other words it is a dialectal form, in this case of the Ngwana word *kimia*. In Kilira the equivalent would be *kobia*. [192]

Death songs are normally sung at the death of an adult, male or
533 female, during the ensuing festival (*molimo*), but some of them may
765 be sung at other times of crisis that threaten life, notably sickness or poor hunting. Certain songs seem to be reserved for actual death, but my impression is that this is a matter of personal attitude, for there are other ways in which a distinction is more clearly made between what are called the lesser and the greater *molimo*, the latter being the festival concerned solely with death.

533 To the same extent that the *elima* songs are of rather more impor-
462 tance to women than men, so are *molimo* songs considered more the
• 821 concern of men. There is, however, no absolute exclusion. On the
765 contrary, the male youths are an integral part of the *elima* festival, which celebrates their puberty just as much as it celebrates that of the girls, and although the actual festival is occasioned by the physical maturation of the girls, who are then taught the *elima* songs, the male youths are needed to sing the chorus to certain of those songs. In the *molimo*, at one point, the roles of the sexes are reversed (as in *ekokomea*), with the women taking over the men's songs, the men sitting back and listening, like women.

533 An examination of Mbuti song form not only reveals areas of con-
182 cern to the Mbuti, such as their food-getting activities, life and death,
181 but it also reveals the concern of the Mbuti for cooperative activity. Each type of song requires a group of people to sing it, and if there is a solo it is sung over a chorus, and the solo is passed around from one individual to another. This is similar to the Mbuti rejection of individual authority and their concern for dispersing leadership as widely as possible. There are certain parts of certain songs that are
[561] sung by youths, hunters or elders, strictly according to age, and song form thus also reinforces Mbuti concern for the age differential as an important element of their social structure. The songs are most frequently in round, or canon, form, and the hunting songs, in order to heighten the need for the closest possible cooperation (the same need that is demanded by the hunt itself), are sometimes sung in *hoquet*.[6]

533 There are certain similarities between the hunting songs and the *molimo* songs, but this is an area that requires a great deal more care-

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[6] This is a technique in which each note of the melodic line is taken by a single individual who sings that note alone, at the correct moment. The melodic line is thus literally divided among the participants (sometimes singing in groups of two or three), and the melody can only be reconstituted and heard by the cooperation of all. The complications are heightened by the use of canon, and by the use of a harmonic pattern which is also sung in *hoquet*, and proceeds clockwise as the melodic line proceeds, as always, counterclockwise.

elsewhere. If this is taken to indicate a lack of concern not only for 58
kinship but also for social stability, it can also be regarded, precisely 621
because of the freedom it allows, as a further mechanism by which 602
the constant flux so characteristic of the band is maintained. That
this flux itself has a function will be seen in the final chapter, when we
deal again with the Mbuti/Villager relationship.

The different functions of each age level have been described (pp. 561
110, 111, 112 *seq.*), and the organizational value of making the horizontal 621
distinction in the composite band is self-evident. Each age
level is cooperative in activity, certain activities (such as the hunt)
calling for cooperation between two or three age levels still preserving
the distinction by allocating different roles to each. Interpersonal [571]
relations are determined primarily by age level, and authority has also
been seen to be diffused through the different levels.

The transition from childhood to youth is marked for boys and 881 •
girls alike by participation in the *elima*. Adulthood is conveyed by 885
the act of marriage, which carries with it the right to own a net. The 581
rare bachelor who proves himself as a great hunter and still does not 561
marry may, by combined virtue of his age and his skill, own a net, but
the accepted qualification is that of marriage, emphasizing another
major Mbuti concern, that of procreation.

Transition from adulthood to elderhood is less clear-cut and more 888
filled with tension, for though an elder enjoys many privileges and 561
has, set aside for him as such, certain vital roles in the social organization,
he misses the excitement of the hunt, the pride and satisfaction
of rearing a family, and he certainly recognizes that this is the final
transition.

The nonlineal (or cognatic) band, then, divided horizontally into 621
age levels rather than vertically into lineages, effects an absolute unity 613
throughout each level, whereas it would otherwise be divided into as 561
many sections as there were lineages. Its persistence and continuity
are seen in terms of territory. There may well be a tendency for certain
lineages to remain within the same territory for successive generations,
but such association is incidental rather than structurally determined.
The demography and internal organization, while allowing 621
for marriage within the band, make it essential for much marriage [582]
exchange to take place between different and preferably not adjacent
bands. Since the residence of the newlywed couple is determined by [591]
immediate economic considerations, such as the relative size and [181]
composition of the two bands, territory is obviously not an individual

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.276-G]

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34. A youth, recently initiated, is still considered far from manhood in the forest. Here he helps an older brother set up the net.

[881]
[885]
[593]

*177 the camp is filled with *akami*—not in search of *ekimi*, but in the hopes
578 626 of doing as the hunters do, killing noise with more noise.

*177 5. SONG brings us to the crux of the opposition between Mbuti and
583 villagers, for all song in villages is by definition "empty," even if sung
181 by Mbuti, and even if, as is rarely the case, the song is strictly Mbuti
in origin. That is, while in the village the Mbuti no longer have the
ultimate safeguard of being able to "rejoice the forest" through song.
Even if they tried, it would be *bulé*. Song being directly associated
with *ekimi*, it follows, and the Mbuti affirm, that there can be no
*177 *ekimi*, or "quiet," in the village. *Ekimi*, as stated, is the ultimate goal
181 of the Mbuti, and it is only *ekimi* that can please the forest. Visiting
[224] the village, then, would be a treacherous act beyond reconciliation
under Mbuti values if it were not for the Mbuti attitude to such
[778] visits as being a form of hunt, for hunting is pleasing to the forest,
and hunting is also associated with noise and danger, *akami* and
mota. The rationalization may seem a feeble one, but to the Mbuti
it is adequate and convenient.

*177 Thus while the more formal institutions of the band, age levels and
181 territorial affiliation, work internally to achieve stability and externally
182 to directly counteract village attempts to subordinate the Mbuti, so
439 do forest values directly counter village values, maintaining the complete
separation of the two peoples. The economic exchange that
takes place, while undeniably mutually convenient, may also be in
part a mere recognition of territorial propinquity and of mutual opposition,
a mechanism for avoiding open hostility, which would otherwise
be the only possible relationship.

*177 The strongly forest-oriented value system of the Mbuti, while oper-
181 ating toward the maintenance of internal order, completely counters
186 the attempts of the villagers to assert their dominance by supernatural
sanctions based on village values. But the answer to the question
[224] as to why the Mbuti go to the extreme of allowing themselves to be
circumcised and initiated by the villagers may be more than that of-
• [881] fered by the Mbuti hunting metaphor.

*177 The metaphor recalls the technique of a hunter in taking on the
181 appearance (and smell) of his quarry, of rubbing himself with a paste
186 made of the heart and brains and eyes of the animal so that he can
224 feel and think and see like his quarry. It is not a technique widely
practiced, though it *is* practiced by elephant hunters, and by some
archers, and by elders who are out hunting on their own. It is more

widely practiced in the mimetic hunting dances, by which it may be 177*
supposed that the dancer is trying, magically, to influence the action 18
and movement of the game. In this light the Mbuti acceptance of the 186
nkumbi seems more plausible, as a "magical" means of gaining power 224
over the villagers. It is not entirely unlike the situation described by [788]
Beattie (1960, p. 78) for Nyoro reactions to foreign powers such as [789]
Europeans, Polish expatriates, and airplanes. The Nyoro attempt was to gain some control over the situation by becoming possessed by the spirits of these foreign powers.

There may also be a certain amount of seepage of village beliefs 177*
into the Mbuti subconscious, despite the formidable structural oppo- 754
sition they have raised to all such influences. There is certainly cause to think that the village beliefs of witchcraft and sorcery, confused as they are by the Mbuti, nonetheless have for them a certain sinister ring of conviction.[9]

It is perhaps for that reason that the only plainly discernible sym- 177*
bolism evident in Mbuti ritual is concerned with life. Of all the oppo- 761
sitions between the forest and the village, such as abundance/hunger, 182
unity/disunity, moral/immoral, equal/unequal, cool/hot, song/silence, quiet/noise, the most significant are undoubtedly the last two, for silence and noise are associated ultimately with death. If the [776]
Mbuti suspect there are, in the village, supernatural powers with
which they should come to terms, it is for purposes of defense. And [778]
they see their major defense in the power of their own supernatural, the forest.

Their desire is to counteract the forces of hunger, disunity, immoral- 182
ity, inequality, heat, silence and noise, forces that amount to death 761
for the Mbuti. Their focus of attention is on the preservation and con- 765
tinuation of life. The relatively simple ritual, if it can truly be called 561
that, of the *molimo* festival is supercharged with an emotional concern, a burning desire, for life. As might be expected, it reinforces [578]
those aspects of Mbuti society that require constant attention: age divisions are clearly symbolized in the three fires for the three upper age groups; the value of sharing (on nonlineal grounds!) is emphasized in the technical division of the songs, again bringing in division along age lines and demanding close cooperation; the reluctance to share is symbolized at the same time as the friction between youths

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[9] Again, a linguistic study might help greatly, not only through separating institutions and concepts that derive from different tribes, but in revealing the location of hidden areas of forest/village opposition. Unfortunately we still lack any published studies of KiNgwana, KiBira and KiLesé, let alone of the divers Mbuti groups.

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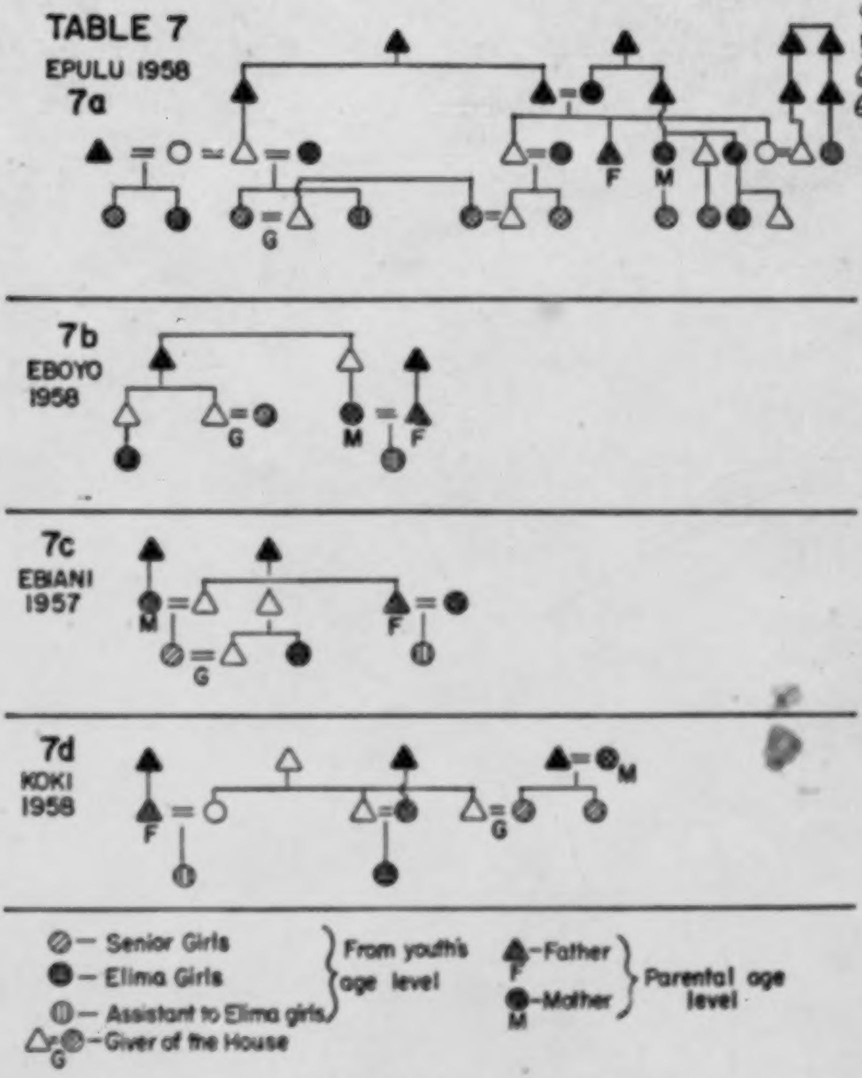
TABLE 7
EPULU 1958
7a
F
M
G
7b
EBOYO
1958
G
M
F
7c
EBIANI
1957
M
F
G
7d
KOKI
1958
F
G
M
— Senior Girls
— Elima Girls
— Assistant to Elima girls
From youth's age level
–Giver of the House
G
–Father
F
–Mother
M
Parental age level

TABLE 7a–d *elima* participation

But on my second visit, in 1954, I was provided with a real op- 114
portunity for studying the relationship between the Pygmies and 177
their village neighbors. The event was the decision of the local Negro 881
chief to hold a tribal nkumbi initiation festival. This is a festival in which all boys between the ages of about nine and twelve are circumcised, then set apart and kept in an initiation camp where they are taught the secrets of tribal lore, to emerge after two or three months with the privileges and responsibilities of adult status.

The nkumbi is a village custom, but in areas where the practice 177
prevails the Pygmies always send their children to be initiated along 881
with the Negro boys. This has been cited as an example of their dependence on the Negroes and of their lack of an indigenous culture. The Negroes take all the leading roles in the festival, and as no Pygmy belongs to the tribe, none can become a ritual specialist, so the Pygmy boys always have to depend on the Negroes for admission to an initiation, and for the subsequent instruction. An uninitiated male, Pygmy or Negro, young or old, is considered as a child—half a man at best.

Only relatives of the boys undergoing initiation are allowed to live in the camp, though any adult initiated male can visit the camp during the daytime.

But it so happened that on this occasion there were no Negro boys of the right age for initiation, so the only men who could live in the camp and stay there all night were Pygmies. To go against the custom of allowing just relatives to live in the camp would have brought death and disaster. Nevertheless the Negroes went ahead with the festival because it has to be held to avoid offending the tribal ancestors. The Negro men would have liked to stay in the camp all night, as normally instruction goes on even then, the boys being allowed to sleep only for short periods. But custom was too strong, and they had to rely on the Pygmy fathers to maintain order in the camp after dark and not allow the children to have too much sleep.

123 The Pygmies, however, did not feel bound by the custom, as it
177 was not theirs anyway, and they invited me to stay with them, know-
• 881 ing perfectly well that I would bring with me plenty of tobacco, palm wine, and other luxuries. I was, after all, they said, father of all the children, so I was entitled to stay. The Negroes protested, but there was nothing they could do. On the one hand they felt that I would be punished for my offense by their supernatural sanctions; on the other they themselves hoped to profit by my presence. At least I could be expected to share in the expenses, which otherwise they would have to bear, of initiating the eight Pygmy boys.

And so I entered the camp and saw the initiation through from beginning to end. It was not a particularly comfortable time, as we got very little sleep. The Pygmy fathers were not in the least interested in staying awake simply to keep their children awake and teach them nonsensical songs, so the Negroes used to make periodic raids during the night, shouting and yelling and lashing out with whips made of thorny branches, to wake everyone up. Besides that,
[352] the camp was not very well built and the heavy rains used to soak the ground we slept on; only the boys, sleeping on their rough bed made of split logs, were dry. In the end we all used to climb up there and sit—there was not room for everyone to lie down—cold and miserable, waiting for the dawn to bring another daily round of exhausting singing and dancing.

123 But at the end of it all I knew something about the Pygmies, and they knew something about me, and a bond had been made between us by all the discomforts we had shared together as well as by all the fun. And when the initiation was over and we were off in the forest I learned still more. It was then that I knew for sure that much of what had been written about the Pygmies to date gave just about as false a picture as did the thirteenth-century cartographer who
181 painted them as one-legged troglodytes. In the village, or in the
177 presence of even a single Negro or European, the Pygmies behave

000 *Opposite:* Asofalinda's eldest daughter being painted with *kangay* juice for a wedding.

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[illegible]
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Akidinimba (in hat) celebrates her forthcoming wedding with the other girls of the *elima*.

[P 72-G]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Masalito comforts the young Kaoya during the *nkumbi* rites at a Negro village.

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[P 72-I]

765 771 magical act but a way of emphasizing that this is something in which every single member of the group must participate.

765 562 At first I had thought that the molimo was virtually the sole concern of the men. In the evenings, when the singing first started, there were sometimes a few girls who stood nearby and danced among themselves as we sang, but they were soon sent to join the rest of the women and children in their huts—certainly long before the molimo made its appearance. But one day I felt that something different was going on.

881 765 I had noticed that Kondabate, Manyalibo's daughter, who was married to Ausu, was building an extension at the back of her hut. She and Ausu had no children, and when I asked her why she was enlarging her home she said there was going to be an *elima*, and that all the girls would stay in her hut, under her care. An elima is a celebration that takes place when a girl reaches maturity, as marked by the first appearance of menstrual blood. At such a time she enters a special hut with her girl friends and stays there for a month. But I had heard none of the usual discussion about the event, and I felt this could not be the full answer.

765 574 888 Then, that afternoon, an old, old woman arrived with her husband. They stopped first in Cephu's camp, where they had relatives, but then came on into the main camp, where they were received with the greatest respect. The husband sat down at the kumamolimo and was offered food; the old woman disappeared into Kondabate's house. She stayed there until evening, but all I could hear from inside were occasional snatches of song. It was plain that there were several girls in there as well, and it sounded as though they were either being taught new songs or else rehearsing songs they already knew. They never sang more than a few bars at a time, and I was continually being startled, thinking that I heard something resembling one of the molimo songs.

765 888 That evening the old man joined us for the molimo singing. He

765
ing in the shadows, until with surprisingly swift and agile strides 533
she was once more in our midst. In her hands she held a long roll of 765
nkusa twine. The men continued singing, and as they sang, the old 533
woman went around knotting a loop around each man's neck, so 824
that in the end we were all tied together. The men made no attempt [284]
to resist; rather, they ignored what was going on. When they were all tied in this way, however, they stopped singing.

Moke spoke—I am not sure whether it was for my benefit or 765
because it was his place to say what he did. He said, "This woman has tied us up. She has bound the men, bound the hunt, and bound the molimo. We can do nothing." Then Manyalibo said that we had to admit we had been bound, and that we should give the woman something as a token of our defeat; then she would let us go. A certain quantity of food and cigarettes was agreed upon, and the old woman solemnly went among us again, untying each man. Nobody attempted to loose himself, but as each man was untied he began to sing once more—the molimo was free. The old woman received her gifts and went back to Cephu's camp, where she and her husband were staying. The couple stayed for another week or two, but she danced only once again. Before she left us she went to every man, giving him her hand to touch as though it were some kind of blessing.

It was not long after this that everyone started talking about when they should being the molimo to an end. There seemed to be no specific length of time that it should run, and it was just a question of convenience.

There was the matter of the elima to be considered, too, as evi- 881 •
dently one really was due to be held for two girls, each of whom had reached her first period. The main problem was not the fulfilling of ritual necessities, but rather how to make the most of the festive
occasion. There were different schools of thought as to whether 881
the elima should take place in the village or the forest; the younger 177

881 men held out for the village, the older for the forest. All the older
177 men except Tungana, that is. That wily old grandfather thought
881 the village was better as they might be able to make money out of
177 tourists who would pay to see them dance. Tourists had been in-
609 creasing in number ever since the Animal Station had been established at Epulu, and the Pygmies found tourists even easier to trick than villagers.

881 It was eventually decided that the elima, which had already begun
177 in Kondabate's hut, should go to the village and take over Ekianga's house, as it was the biggest and he was related to one of the girls anyway. The villagers would give food to the elima. Asofalinda would be in charge. Everyone else would stay a while longer in the forest.
[765 Then they would bring the molimo to the village one night and have a final dance there, because the villagers believed that a period of mourning, which is how they regarded the molimo, should end with a ritual feast, and so they would give the Pygmies more food. That would put all the men in a good humor to attend to their part of the elima festivities.

765 I was a little surprised that they should even think of bringing the
177 molimo to the village. Moke told me not to worry, that no villagers would know anything of what went on in the forest, and if any villagers came to watch they would only see the Pygmies imitating what the villagers do themselves. But he shook his head and added, "Even so, it *is* bad. It is a thing of the forest, and it should end there. Perhaps we shall have to end it twice."

361 The night before we were due to move back to the village every-
152 one was very quiet. The women prepared the food for the evening
[521 meal without talking to one another. Tungana sat outside his hut, hunched forward, his gray old head resting on one hand because he had an abscess on the side of his neck. Moke wandered restlessly from one end of the camp to the other, and Masisi snapped at every-
361 one who gave him an excuse. This was some three months after

P 177 to verify just how much meat there was, accusing them of having eaten it all themselves. But the Pygmies paid no attention. Some made for their own village and dumped their belongings there. I wandered on with the others who went straight to their patrons to whom they presented the meat they had brought with them. Before long they were sitting down in whatever shade they could find, fanning themselves to keep the flies and mosquitoes away, eating heartily from enamel dishes, drinking dirty village water from enamel mugs.

P 177 361 C 361 After spending some time, rather like the Pygmies, greeting the various villagers, I returned to the Pygmy village and sat in the shade of my veranda looking down the dismal, double row of tumbledown huts. About half a mile away, in the background, the forest raised its tall dark face against the edge of the plantations, dwarfing the leafy plantain trees that were only three times as tall as men, making them look like blades of grass. Ineffectual blades of grass that had, with the help of village-man, usurped the place of the great primeval forest, but which in a year or two would be choked to a final death as the forest claimed its own. Clouds of dust arose as a small, disconsolate group of children played football with a ball presented to them by some fond villager. The dust got into my nostrils and made me feel suddenly bad-tempered. Kenge, who was trying to cook me a meal, cursed the children and told them to go and play somewhere else. But they had no bopi—no cool, clean streams, no vine swings. So they went off to chase the dogs, goats and chickens of the nearest Negro household.

At the far end of the little village stood Ekianga's house, the only one that was not falling to pieces. It straddled the width of the village, bridging the space between the two not very straight rows of smaller huts. The elima girls made a couple of sorties from the single
● ? [881] door, dashing around to the back of the house where they could not be seen. Otherwise all was quiet.

P
765 the Pygmies came in to eat. The men came in and sat down and ate
574 without ceremony while their patrons watched hungrily. But they
177 were not related to Balekimito, so they could not partake. Women, too, were excluded, according to the village rules of the game, but I saw a number of dishes quietly slipped to one side, and shortly afterward all the women were enjoying their own feast, concealed behind the elima hut.

C The villagers asked if everyone had ritually bathed, to wash off
765 the taint of death, and everyone politely said yes. The villagers then
563 asked if the Pygmies had any meat to spare, and the Pygmies equally
P
765 politely said no. They had given it all to the molimo, they said,
177 and to this there was no answer, for it was a very creditable thing to do, in village eyes. I bought a large quantity of palm wine, however, and this mollified to some extent the strained feelings of the patrons. They knew they were being deceived and cheated, yet they felt they were only doing what was right in trying to impose their beliefs and practices on the forest savages who had no culture of their own. If the forest spirits struck the Pygmies down for not having heeded their patrons, for not having performed all the necessary rituals as they had been told, then it was not the fault of the villagers. They drank their fill and departed.

P Once the Negroes had gone we all tried to get some sleep, for it
765 was late afternoon and we had had no rest. But for three months the
512
513 men had sung and danced and feasted every night and for three months the women and children had been sent to bed early, forbidden to come out and take part in the festivities except for the dance of the old woman. Now the molimo was over, and the women
P took advantage of the fact. After all, an elima had begun, and that
• 881 was as important to the women as the molimo was to the men. At dusk all the girls of the elima came out of their hut. Their beautiful
P
[832] young bodies shone and glistened with the palm oil that had been carefully rubbed into the skin, making them even more alluring to

the young bachelors. And together with the older women they began to sing, in deep contralto tones. The men protested loudly that they were tired and wanted to sleep. But the women just laughed and sang all the louder. The elima had started in earnest. 881 [832] [533] use of the original name. Such was the case with the molimo, and such was also the case with the elima. Who borrowed from whom is a difficult question, and perhaps not a very important one. The difference that emerges in the process of borrowing is much easier to see and adds much more to our understanding. P C 177 178

To both peoples the elima is concerned with the arrival of a young girl at the age of maturity, her transition from girlhood to the full flowering of womanhood. This coming of age is marked more dramatically for girls than for boys by the physical changes that take place. Both Pygmies and villagers recognize the significance of the first appearance of menstrual blood, and both celebrate it with a festival which they call "elima." But there the similarity ends. P C 881 •

My friend Amina told me a great deal about the elima among the BaBira, and I learned more from older women in different villages that I lived in from time to time. Everywhere, right through to the very edge of the forest, I found the same story among the villagers. Blood of any kind is a terrible and powerful thing, associated with injury and sickness and death. Menstrual blood is even more terrible because of its mysterious and regular recurrence. Its first appearance is considered by the villagers as a calamity—an evil omen. The girl who is defiled by it for the first time is herself in danger, and even more important she has placed the whole family and clan in danger. She is promptly secluded, and only her mother (and, I suspect, one or two other close and senior female relatives) may see her and care for her. She has to be cleansed and purified, and the clan itself has to be protected, by ritual propitiation, from the evil she has brought upon them. At the best, the unfortunate girl is considered a considerable nuisance and expense. C [115] C 881 C [826] [841]

It is generally assumed that the girl was brought into this condition by some kind of illicit intercourse, and her mother demands of her who is responsible. This is the girl's chance to name the boy of her choice, whether or not she has even so much as spoken to C 881 584 [834]

31 Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

C 881 584 him. He is then accused and has to make suitable offerings which are necessary not only to help in the protection of the girl and her family, but also for his own protection, since he has been linked with her verbally, however untruthfully. He may then deny the charge, and if the girl's parents think he would make a suitable husband, there may be some litigation. Or they may consider him unsuitable, and let the matter drop. If he likes the girl and accepts the responsibility, this constitutes the first step toward official betrothal. If he disclaims all responsibility, then the girl has to try again; until she has a husband the danger is thought to remain.

C 881 The period of seclusion varies from tribe to tribe, and even from village to village. Sometimes it is just for a week or two; sometimes it lasts a month or more. And sometimes it lasts until the girl is betrothed and can be led from her room of shame to be taken away by her husband. C 583 585 At the final wedding ritual she is ceremonially cut off from her family, and told that she is now her husband's responsibility and must fend for herself and not come running home every time she gets beaten. The point, of course, is that if she does this her husband can claim back the wealth he will have already paid over in the expectancy of her fidelity and success as a wife and bearer of children. And by the time the disaster occurs her family will almost certainly have spent the money to obtain a bride for one of her brothers.

C 881 The whole affair is a rather shameful one in the eyes of the villagers, as well as a dangerous one. It is something best concealed and not talked about in public. The girl is an object of suspicion, scorn, repulsion, and anger. It is not a happy coming of age.

P 881 841 826 For the Pygmies, the people of the forest, it is a very different thing. To them blood, in the usual context in which they see it, is equally dreadful. But they recognize it as being the symbol not only of death, but also of life. And menstrual blood to them means life. Even between a husband and wife it is not a frightening thing.

though there are certain restrictions connected with it. In fact, the 881 841 Pygmies consider that any couple that really wants to have children 842] should "sleep with the moon."

So when a young Pygmy girl begins to flower into maturity, 881 and blood comes to her for the first time, it comes to her as a gift, received with gratitude and rejoicing—rejoicing that the girl is now a potential mother, that she can now proudly and rightfully take a husband. There is no mention of fear or superstition, and everyone is told the good news.

The girl enters seclusion, but not the seclusion of the village girl. She takes with her all her young friends, those who have not yet reached maturity, and some older ones.

In the house of the elima the girls celebrate the happy event together. [861] Together they are taught the arts and crafts of motherhood by an old and respected relative. They learn not only how to live like adults, but how to sing the songs of adult women. Day after day, night after night, the elima house resounds with the throaty contralto of the older women and the high, piping voices of the youngest. It is a time of gladness and happiness, not for the women alone but for the whole people. Pygmies from all around come to pay their respects, the young men standing or sitting about outside the elima house in the hopes of a glimpse of the young beauties inside. And there are special elima songs which they sing to one [533] another, the girls singing a light, cascading melody in intricate harmony, the men replying with a rich, vital chorus. For the Pygmies the elima is one of the happiest, most joyful occasions in their lives.

And so it was with happiness that we all heard that not one but two girls in our camp had been blessed by the moon.

At first it was just Akidinimba, daughter of Manyalibo's sister. 881 Akidinimba was a notorious flirt who considered herself the most 832 beautiful girl in the world. She was just sufficiently plump to be envied by less well-endowed girls, but not so plump that her maidenly

881| figure was lost. She was particularly proud of her breasts, which
832 were certainly the largest in that part of the forest, and she showed them off to advantage, when dancing, by adopting an unusually springy gait. As her breasts bounced up and down the eyes of all the bachelors followed their movement with pleasure. Everyone agreed that Akidinimba's elima would be a lively one.

881| But Manyalibo's niece was in no hurry, so for the first few days she remained in the hut of her cousin, Kondabate, and there were no particular signs of activity visible from the outside.

Then we heard that Kidaya had also been blessed with the blood, [159] and she went to join Akidinimba. Kidaya was a niece of Ekianga, and she was more modest than the really shameless Akidinimba. Kidaya was handsome rather than pretty, and she had a reputation for being able to beat up even the strongest youths if their advances were not welcome to her. So the elima promised to be exciting as well as lively.

The two girls each chose their personal assistants and called in all their young friends to join them in the hut of Kondabate and her husband, Ausu. Kondabate built on a special extension to accommodate them. This was in Apa Kadiketu, and not long afterward the elima was moved to the village, where it took over Ekianga's house. Mambunia, Masisi's brother, went with them to be "father of the elima," to make sure that they were protected and properly cared for. Asofalinda, Kidaya's aunt, went as "mother of the elima," to look after the personal needs of the girls, to see that they got the right food, and generally to act as chaperone. Mambunia was a bachelor, and Asofalinda a widow.

When we arrived at the village for the close of the molimo festival, the elima was well under way. The girls had already learned most of their songs, and they were now at the stage where they were taking a more active, even an aggressive interest in the eligible bachelors of the neighborhood. In the evenings, when they assembled

outside their hut to sing, they were carefully guarded by their 881
mothers and older sisters. But the girls and their attendants cast sly glances at the young men who always drew close to watch and listen. They whispered and laughed among themselves, and when they 881
stood up to dance they often made it very clear by their gestures 832
which boy had taken their fancy. Sometimes they chose at random simply to annoy a special lover, and boys often stalked away in a huff. That was a mistake.

At any time of the day the girls were likely to emerge from the [411]
elima house armed with long fito whips. If you were close enough you could hear them plotting their strategy behind the door, but there was no escape once they burst out into the open. Any males, young or old, and particularly those who had shown annoyance at being teased, were liable to be chased and whipped by the eager young furies.

I myself was chased once, for a good half-mile down a forest trail, [123]
running as fast as I could. It was considered cowardly to run, but I ran with good reason, for to be whipped establishes an obligation to visit your assailant in the elima house. Once inside there is no need to do anything further, but you are subject to considerable attention if you refuse. And to get into the house, in the first place, requires no small amount of courage and strength. So I ran. Most other bachelors had less reason and no desire to escape, so they contented themselves with giving as good as they got, throwing sticks and stones at the girls, running around the village, dodging behind houses and through fields of sugar cane. The battles never lasted long, but sometimes they came to an abrupt end.

The girls often whipped old men or young boys, and in either case it was generally considered a compliment and did not carry the same obligations that it would have done had they been eligible bachelors. But sometimes they hit too hard, and the old men resented this and shouted, while the boys simply screamed their heads off.

881 832 In the one case Mambunia would come out of his hut in a temper and send all the girls back to their house, and in the other case Asofalinda would run amok among the girls, boxing their ears until they, in turn, cried like the children they had beaten.

881 574 But the elima beauties did not confine themselves to their own village. After all, most of the men there were relatives and so could not decently be invited into the elima house. Many strangers came to visit from other groups, but sometimes the attendance was disappointing. Then the girls would set out to visit one of their hunting [123] camps. I followed them on one such escapade, having secured a promise first that I would be given complete immunity. It was a strange procession, the girls all oiled and painted to look their best, wearing grass skirts in imitation of the boys' initiation (an innovation that infuriated the villagers, who felt that their customs were being desecrated, and that caused open hostilities in the end), and carrying stout whips, twice as tall as they were. There were about eight of them in all, led of course by the irrepressible Akidinimba, bouncing her breasts up and down in a determined manner as she marched along the road, past the Station de Chasse, and over the bridge to the far side of the Epulu River. The villagers came out to look as we passed, but from a respectful distance. On other occasions I have seen a party such as this dive into the midst of a group of village men and women, lashing out with all their might—not entirely in the friendly way in which they would whip, say, old Tungana, as a compliment to his virility.

On the far side of the Epulu we climbed up the hill toward Eboyo, the sun beating down on us so that the chatter and laughter of the girls was almost stilled. But just before reaching Eboyo we turned off, following a trail through an old plantation and into the forest. As the trees closed in around and above us, the girls began to 881 574 533 sing. They sang loudly and proudly, marching with even more determination than before, their heads back, looking at the familiar leafy world that was theirs. One at a time they sang ribald little solos, 881 574 533 each trying to outdo the others, the rest joining in with a throaty chorus that cascaded downward like a waterfall. Each girl held her note as the others came in after her, swelling the volume of a great chord of music until they had no breath left. Then they all stopped together, sharply and suddenly, and cocked their heads to one side to listen for the echo sent back to them by the forest.

And so we continued our noisy, festive way, until we had climbed 881 574 [487] up and down the forest paths for about an hour. On this side of the Epulu the forest was hilly, and at times the path was steep and difficult. But still the girls sang. At last we came to the edge of one of Sabani's hidden plantations, and the girls became silent. They made their way cautiously to the edge of a cluster of houses built in the middle of the plantation. This was where some of Sabani's relatives lived when they were keeping an eye on planting or harvesting activities. Akidinimba explained, in a gusty, confidential whisper, that her very special boy friend, Pumba, would probably be there. She was very much in love with him, she said, far more so than with any of the other boys. And she wanted him. The only trouble was that he did not seem to want her.

Having discovered that Pumba was indeed there, dozing on a 881 832 chair in the baraza of one of the houses, the girls entered the village with a rush, shouting and yelling and brandishing their whips. Pumba awoke with a start, but he was too low down in the chair and could not get up in time to escape. He was plainly terrified, because in her determination to get her man Akidinimba had detailed all the other girls to go for him alone. When Pumba finally managed to break away and run blindly into the safety of the hut, slamming the door shut behind him, his body was covered with long angry welts, some of which were bleeding. Akidinimba wiped her nose with the back of her arm and smiled grimly. Well pleased with her success she simply sat down outside the door waiting for Pumba

881 to emerge. Pumba knew that he was no match for a girl with such
832 patience and perseverance. He opened negotiations from the other
side of the locked and bolted door.

Akidinimba was in no hurry, so she carefully examined the door and the single window, to see if there was any chance of breaking in. But the door was stout, and the window was tightly closed by a wooden shutter. So she decided, with some statesmanship, to negotiate. In return for a promise that Pumba would be allowed to emerge free of any danger of further attack, and free of any other obligations, she extracted a reluctant promise that he would attend the final stages of the elima back at Camp Putnam. A very downcast Pumba emerged and immediately started complaining that there had really
881 been no need to beat him quite so hard. The girls asked him where
832 the other Pygmies were, and he pointed across the plantation to the
574 far side, where the forest stood out darkly into the blue sky. The
girls told him to stay behind, and not to try and warn his friends. They then set off, this time with Kidaya to the fore, picking their way across the tangle of fallen trees slowly and silently.

On the far side we entered the forest and continued southward for a short while. Kidaya, plotting her strategy like a general, sent out a couple of scouts. As a result of their report, we veered around to one side until we came to a slight rise. From the top of this we looked down through the trees across a leafy floor, completely bare of any undergrowth except for a few ferns. Below us lay a typically picturesque Pygmy camp, shimmering in the haze of smoke from
[361] innumerable fires. It was built in two circles, joining each other as if
in an attempt to become one. We could hear the idle chatter of men
[517] and women as they lay on their beds or on their hunting nets, dozing
[231] in the midday warmth. A dog wandered lazily from hut to hut, sniffing
hungrily, confident that his masters were far too sleepy to bother him. The sun, directly overhead, came down through the trees in irregular, jagged shafts, so that parts of the camp were bright,

others in almost total darkness. It must have been quite an old camp, 881
for all the leaves on the huts were dry and brown. 832

We crept right up to the nearest hut without being seen, and 574
then Kidaya ran lightly across the clearing and gave the sleeping
youth of her choice a sound thwack with her whip. He leaped up, [152]
not so much in fear or anger as in surprise and in shame that he
should have been caught. He grabbed for his bow and picked up a
small stone which he fired back at Kidaya as he ran away. Kidaya
laughed with delight. This was a sure sign that her overtures had
been accepted.

The whole of the camp was awake before the rest of the girls had
had time to whip more than a few boys, and it soon became alive
with lashing whips and flying sticks and stones. The women and
children crept into the backs of their huts for shelter, while the men
ran from rubbish dump to rubbish dump, gathering the banana
skins they used as ammunition. When they could not find any, they
used whatever came to hand. A slice of banana skin fired from a [411]
taut bow at close quarters can be quite painful, and the girls found
that the boys were putting up a good fight. So they picked up a few
vine baskets that had been left lying around, and using these as
shields they advanced on their quarry.

The fight got more and more fierce, and at one time the boys managed
to drive the girls right back into the huts. Then they stood at
the entrances and fired their pellets of banana skin inside, giving rise
to squeals of anguish. But Kidaya was too tough to be done down so
easily. She emerged from her shelter without even a basket for protection, 881
and made a dash for the nearest fire. As she bent down to pick 832 372
up a burning log, her particular boy friend fired a pellet that struck 574
her on her buttocks with a smack. Kidaya spun around and hurled
the log with all her might; then she rubbed her backside affectionately
and smiled. The other girls also began throwing logs, and soon there
was hardly a fire left in the camp, and burning logs were scattered
everywhere.

• 881 everywhere. The men retreated to the outskirts of the clearing and 832 stood uncertainly, peering around trees or over the tops of huts, their 574 bows and banana skins at the ready.

But the girls felt they had achieved their end. Each one had marked her victim, who was bound by the strongest bonds of self-respect to respond to the challenge and brave the elima house itself. Pumba, who had followed at a safe distance, sat disconsolately on a log that Akidinimba had thrown at him in a friendly way, and he did not even look up as we left.

881 The girls sang all the way home; even when they left the forest and made their way back across the Epulu, gleaming orange and gold in the late afternoon light, they sang. They sang so that everyone should know that they were the *Bamelima*, the people of the elima, girls who had been blessed with the blood and were now women.

881 224 There were occasions when the mood was different. One evening in particular, after a relatively quiet day, nearly all the women of the group gathered together outside the elima house. It was toward the end of the time that had been set, in an arbitrary fashion, for the duration of the festival. The Pygmies felt they had been in the village long enough, and the elima was interfering with their hunting. As much as the young men enjoyed hunting, the attraction of the elima house offered strong competition. If the boys were away too long, due to pressure from their parents, the girls complained that they were not being treated properly. Everyone agreed that this was an insoluble conflict, unless the elima was either brought to an end or moved out to the forest. It was not only the boys that were away from the hunt, but also the women and girls, who would otherwise have been gainfully employed gathering and helping to drive more animals into the men's nets. And the women said they were having far too good a time in the village. So it was decided to bring the elima to an end.

During this time the older women paid more and more attention 881 to what was going on and gathered almost nightly outside the house to join in the singing. But one evening was different in that almost every woman in the group was there. There were even some women from Cephu's group, which had temporarily detached itself and was now some miles away. They gathered early, before it was fully dark. The bright blue sky was deepening without any of the wild tinges of color that so often come at dusk, and the tiny puffs of cloud that drifted across remained a shining, fluffy white, even when the sky was almost black.

The women brought sticks of fire with them, and some of them cooked and ate their evening meal right there outside the elima house; others just sat around and gossiped, huddling close to the fires from habit, though in the village it was still warm. Inside the house the girls were singing, but the women outside did not join in. The men sat before their huts, watching and waiting. Finally the 881 door opened and the girls trooped out. The younger ones came first, 302 their bodies decorated with modest blobs of white paste made from clay; then came Akidinimba and Kidaya and their attendants, resplendent and magnificent, yet strangely shy. They must have spent hours working on themselves and one another, for they were covered with elaborate patterns skillfully drawn with fingers and thin sticks, also using the white clay. Akidinimba had taken particular trouble to paint her breasts with intricate circles of lines punctuated with blobs, something like a grapevine gone to seed, whereas the more demure Kidaya had concentrated on her buttocks, and these were covered with a hundred carefully painted little stars. Each girl had her favorite style, and each was different. They looked around coyly, to make sure they were being admired, and sat down at the edge of the group of women.

They began singing then, together with the women, much more 881 seriously than they had ever done before. They sang as though they 533

881
533 were women. They sang right through the evening and now and then stood up and danced in a bashful circle around one of the fires. 881 885 533 They sang songs whose words had no particular significance, but which in themselves were of the greatest significance, being songs sung only by adult women. That was why so many of the mothers and grandmothers had assembled, to welcome their daughters into their midst again, no longer as children, but as friends and partners [591] in adult life. Some of the women looked sad, for they knew that this meant that the girls would soon get married, and then they would almost certainly leave to join their husbands in other camps.

881 885 157 Akidinimba was very different from her usual boisterous self. She was still self-assured, and she bounced her breasts up and down as flagrantly as ever, but perhaps she was subdued by the thought that she was no longer the leader of a group of young girls, but only a young and inexperienced member of womanhood, with all the responsibilities this entailed.

881 533 415 Kidaya too was thoughtful. While the others sang Kidaya sat with her back to them, fondling a large clay cooking pot. She tapped on it with her fingers, keeping time to the music. Then she drew it close and held the mouth of the pot against her stomach, bending her head down to listen to the effect. It evidently pleased her, because she continued the experiment by taking hold of her breasts and forcing them into the mouth of the pot, squirming around until she was comfortable. Then she moved her body rhythmically, producing a variety of curious sounds, not only in the tone of the drumming of her hands, but by making sucking noises as the air was forced in and out. When she tired of that she put the pot between her knees, and sang quietly into the mouth of it, getting a deep reverberating effect. This sounded so much like the molimo that the men started, and one of the women turned and said something sharply to Kidaya. 881 152 302 Kidaya herself was a little startled and put the pot away from her. She relapsed into a thoughtful mood, slowly and deliberately rubbing

herself with her hands, wiping off all the beautiful decorations so 881
laboriously painted on her body by her friends. When the singing 152
ended and the girls retired for the night, Akidinimba was still as 302
decorative as when she first appeared, but Kidaya was just a mass of streaked and dirty gray. And there were tears in her eyes.

During the last week the elima battles reached their highest pitch, 881
both sides making the most of the opportunity while it lasted. The elima was, on the surface, a pretty happy-go-lucky affair, and what went on inside the hut was best left to the imagination. But in fact it all had a very definite purpose, and was closely supervised by the watchful eyes of Asofalinda and Mambunia. For the Pygmies, 881
the elima is not just a puberty rite for girls; it is a celebration of 885
adulthood, and just as much for boys as for girls. For Akidinimba 182
and Kidaya certain physical changes had taken place which marked them as women, but for boys there are no such self-evident changes. They have to prove their manhood. Village boys do this by entering the initiation schools, but even though Pygmies enter the same schools, it is for a different purpose, quite unconnected with adulthood as they see it. For them the elima serves the purpose, or at least a part of it.

In the elima, the boy has to show considerable courage to fight his way into the house, after he has been invited. In the last week the women maintain constant guard outside, and they are well supplied with all sorts of ammunition. If they want to keep any particular boy away from their daughters they are perfectly capable of doing it. And when a boy finally succeeds in breaking his way through he still has to face a possible beating from the girls inside. If he has not been invited by having been beaten beforehand, he will certainly have to go through it now.

As well as this, in order to prove himself a man, the boy has to 881
kill "a real animal." That is to say, not a small one, such as a child 885
might kill, but one of the larger antelopes, or even a buffalo, so prov- 224

881 885 224 ing that he is not only capable of feeding his own family but also able to help feed the older members of the group who can no longer fend for themselves.

881 836 584 Once a boy has gained access to the elima hut he may flirt or even sleep with the girl who invited him. The elima gives an opportunity for boys and girls to get to know each other intimately, and such friendships often end in marriage. On the other hand, it gives two lovers a chance to discover that they are unsuited to each other before becoming betrothed officially. 881 836 From what I was told, by older men and women as well as by the bachelors who took part in this elima, it is even possible to have intercourse, but with certain restrictions. These restrictions must be effective in preventing conception, because nowhere have I ever heard of a girl becoming pregnant in an elima house. A boy may sleep with a girl only if she consents. The tacit consent of her mother has already been given by his having been allowed to gain access to the elima house. If he sleeps with her then he must not leave the house and has to stay there until the festival is over, subject to the same restrictions as the girls. But he may decide on just a mild flirtation. Or he may—and this is considered a master move—simply turn around and leave the house without having paid the slightest attention to any of the girls. Whatever happens, there are always young women, such as Kondabate, to keep an eye on their younger companions and see that they do not get into trouble.

881 771 182 The conclusion of this particular elima was an anticlimax. The Pygmies are not a ritualistically minded people; to them the important thing about any festival is that they should openly express their emotions and accept the realities of whatever situation the festival marks. 765 533 Instead of living in constant fear of the spirits of the dead, performing elaborate rituals to remove the souls of the departed as far away as possible and as quickly as possible, the Pygmies sing 881 182 in their memory for months on end, during the molimo. And so,

during the elima, they sing to celebrate the blessing of potential 881 182
motherhood conferred on the fortunate girl or girls. The month or two that the festival lasts gives them time to adapt themselves to the new situation, but they have no need for elaborate ritual acts. When [885] the girls appeared that night and sat down with the women, and sang with them before all the camp, that was a formal public acknowledgment of their new status as women. And yet the elima dragged on for several days afterward.

Part of the reason, of course, was that if they ended with a feast, 881 177 574
in the tradition of the villagers, the villagers would be so pleased that they would probably contribute most of the food. And so it was in this case. For all other practical purposes the elima had come to an end the night they sang together. But the girls had another reason; they wanted to placate the villagers. Sabani in particular had been extremely upset about the nonorthodox way this elima had been conducted. He, and many others, felt it was wrong for the girls to go wandering about from village to village, sometimes sleeping overnight in camps several miles away. This was unheard of. It was, to the villagers, as though a colony of lepers were wandering at large. But even more they resented the liberties the girls took with village custom. There 881 177 292
is a certain dress that village elima girls are meant to wear, because the special leaves of which it is made have the magical power of protection; other dress is ineffective and invites disaster. The Pygmy girls, however, found that the ineffective leaves were far more attractive. As they themselves said, "This plant makes such pretty skirts; why should we make ourselves ugly with that plant? This is a time to rejoice." They also liked to imitate the village boys' ini- 881 177 574
tiation, and this so infuriated, and worried, the village traditionalists that they threatened to invoke the most powerful curses on all the girls. And so the girls put on a traditional ending, village style, to appease them.

On a Sunday morning they came out of their house as soon as

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the first light of dawn flecked the sky with gold. They went down to the banks of a forest stream, where it widened out into a silent pool, and bathed themselves in half-hearted imitation of an elaborate village ritual. Then they oiled their bodies and donned oily new bark cloths and returned to dance in the village. They danced in a tight little circle while the women cooked the food. The villagers came to watch approvingly and to see that the food was properly distributed, for only certain people may eat it. They also made sure that all the leaves which had been used as a sleeping mattress in the elima house were thrown away and the house cleaned thoroughly. In this way they satisfied themselves that no harm would come to "their" Pygmies. The ancestors would be appeased by the feast, and the evil spirit that hovered around the unclean girls would be driven away.

The girls found it all rather tedious and boring, and as soon as they were able they broke off from their dancing and went wandering around the village. Akidinimba was in search of Pumba, who had failed her badly in the final ceremony. The others visited from house to house, in the hopes of gifts and compliments. The older women sat around and enjoyed the food for as long as it lasted; then they broke up and went about their business as though nothing had happened.

The men, for some time, had been talking about where they would build the next hunting camp.

P 177 585 C 563 585 good excuse for a mild flirtation and a great deal of feasting. If two Pygmies want to get married, and they are near a village, then they gladly undergo the village ritual, sanctifying the bond later in their own manner. Everyone is happy; the villagers think the marriage is a success because it was performed according to their customs, while the Pygmy knows it is a success because it followed his as well.

• P 881 177 583 C 881 [584] The villagers naturally looked on the elima as a prelude to the marriages of Akidinimba and Kidaya. The Pygmies, however, regarded it in no such light. They wanted to get back to the forest, where the girls could get married in their own time and in their own way. This would involve no more than an exchange of visits between the families concerned, and the groom's presentation to his in-laws of a large antelope, and perhaps some arrows and a bow. But none the less they were tempted by the idea of more feasting. So there was considerable conflict of ideas and ideals, particularly as the villagers had their own ideas as to whom the girls should marry.

P 881 584 The elima had created a crisis in another direction also. Pumba, whom Akidinimba had loved so ardently and beaten so thoroughly to show her affection, had kept his part of the bargain by coming to the elima house during the final week, fighting his way in as a man. But once inside, instead of making love to Akidinimba he paid court to Kidaya. Fortunately for Kidaya, but unfortunately for Pumba, she did not respond, and without her permission Pumba had no way of forcing his attentions further. So he stalked out of the elima house, pursued by shrieks of rage from Akidinimba. He took his friend Kelemoke's hand briefly, then left without a word. He crossed the Epulu and went back to his camp, and he was seen no more.

P 584 Everyone was upset, because they all felt that the sooner Akidinimba got married the better. Besides, Pumba was popular—so much so that some pressure was brought to bear on Kidaya to force her to accept him. But Kidaya had set her heart on a handsome youth named Atete, who was attached to the village of Katala, several miles

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Village Initiations and Magic

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Of all the ways in which the villagers attempt to assert some kind of control over the BaMbuti, the one which is the most significant, and which they consider to be the most effective and binding, is that of subjecting Pygmy boys to the village initiation, known as the nkumbi. This is one custom which, at first glance, does not seem to have any counterpart in the forest life of the Pygmies. Most outside observers have assumed that the very fact of the Pygmies' participation in the nkumbi—with the absence of any such rites of their own—is a sign of their dependence on the village. Some go so far as to say that this participation shows that the Pygmies are devoid of

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C [832] 863 any culture of their own. If the facts were what they seem to be these observations might hold water, but the real facts are very different.

881 179 [114] During my visit to Epulu in 1954, I had the good fortune to stumble quite accidentally upon fresh information, which almost completely reverses the picture. At that time I was present at an nkumbi, which I have already mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, but which merits more detailed description.

C 881 869 Three years had then elapsed since the previous nkumbi, in 1951, and it was time for another. The purpose of the ceremony is not only to fit village boys for adult life, making them full members of the tribe, but also to ensure the continuity between the past, present and future life of the tribe; between the living and the dead. To the villagers the dead, the ancestors, are just as important as the living, and in many ways more so; and only those who are initiated will join the ancestors when they die. Just as it is important to have a thriving, populous tribe of the living, so is it important to have a thriving, populous tribe of the dead. The dead are, in fact, living—but in another world. Regular initiations are essential to ensure the continued growth of that far-off tribe of ancestors. I have even seen a young boy who had been due to enter the nkumbi but who died just before it took place, circumcised and accorded full initiation rites before burial, just as though he were alive. In this way he was able to go to join his fathers.

C 881 881 177 C [626] C [186] [608] In 1954 there was a unique situation. There was only one village boy of the right age for initiation (usually between the ages of eight and twelve in this area), and his father was a Christian who refused to allow the boy to participate. Every pressure was brought on the family, but to no avail. There were eight Pygmy boys of suitable age, and normally there would have been at least as many villagers. They would all have been initiated together but in such a way as to make clear the inferior status of the Pygmies. One of the initial acts is the circumcision of the boys, and a Pygmy boy is sent first "to clean the knife."

the knife." Then follows a village boy, and these two are bound together by an indissoluble bond, the bond of *kare* blood-brotherhood. They are mutually obligated to help and care for each other for the rest of their lives. This of course helps to reinforce practical and economic links between the two people, as a Pygmy theoretically would be unable to refuse meat to his kare and the kare could not refuse any demand for plantains, manioc or rice.

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But this year the villagers were faced with the alternative of having no initiation at all, or having one for Pygmy boys alone. As the initiation of a Pygmy gives him only partial rights, since he is not a full member of the tribe, a Pygmy initiate can never take a leading part in the nkumbi; all the cutting and all the formal teaching, and certainly all the ritual acts, can be performed only by a qualified villager. So it meant that the villagers would have to go through all the work and expense purely for the Pygmies. There could be no question of not holding the nkumbi, as this would offend the ancestors. And in any case the villagers decided it was worth while as it helped to assert their authority over the Pygmies. I heard speculative talk more than once about how an initiated Pygmy, when he dies, goes to serve the tribal ancestors just as he served the villagers during his life.

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The *makata* sticks were cut and brought out. These are a series of sticks used only at the time of the nkumbi; each one is cut to a different length and tuned to a definite pitch. Some eight or nine men, each with a stick under his left arm, tapping it with a shorter stick held in the right hand, dance around the village playing a complicated but tuneful rhythm, the different notes overlapping and combining. Villagers from the surrounding area congregated at Epulu, some of them from as far as fifty miles away, and dancing and feasting went on for over a week. During that time the boys were collected together, and last-minute appeals were made for young Yusefu, the Christian boy, to be allowed to join. His father settled

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881 the matter by sending him to a mission school the far side of Mambasa.
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The boys were not all cut on the same day, but over a period of
C two weeks. Akobo, the youngest son of Masisi, was the first to be
881 cut, and with him were Masoudi, nephew of Ekianga. They were,
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881 at ten or eleven years of age, as brave as any adult, but they were
177 tough children. It was different with little Sansiwake, one of Cephu's
157 nephews. Sansiwake was one of the most beautiful children imaginable, and as beautiful and gentle in character as he was in appearance. He was soft-spoken, and had a voice as musical as his name. His eyes were the dark melting eyes of the *boloko* antelope, as sensitive and as trusting. On this occasion they were as frightened as those of a young animal caught in a hunting net, struggling for its life. His body was as graceful and as delicate as that of a fawn, and his thoughts were only thoughts of kindness, of concern and love for his mother, Tamasa, whose face was eaten away by yaws, and for his father, Aberi, who was hideously ugly and who constantly brought ridicule on himself and his family.

C Sansiwake was the only boy to cry when being taken away from
881 his home. He cried not only for himself, but because his mother
P was crying bitterly at being parted from her son who was as much a
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177 man to her as her husband. Sansiwake was brought to the village,
152 and his head was shaved as the first of a series of ritual acts sym-
302 bolizing the casting off of an old life. Then Sabani appeared, dressed
C and painted in a terrifying manner, to smell out his next victim. His
292 face was covered with a mask, his body was daubed with white clay,
302 and his arms and legs were bound with great bundles of raffia so that
301 as he danced he looked half animal and half bird. With him were a number of nkumbi drummers, beating a wild and ear-shattering tattoo, driving all women and uninitiated children into their houses, where they locked and barred the doors. Only little Sansiwake was left outside.

VILLAGE INITIATION AND MAGIC

After Sabani had danced around him, with the drums getting C 881
louder and louder, he was picked up and carried by a villager to the P
stream where the cutting was to take place. Some boys were cut in 881 177
the initiation camp, others in the center of the village, and some in
the stream; it depended largely on the whim of the moment. In the
camp there was a scaffold on which the other boys sat while the
doctor cut, but down in the stream, a short distance into the forest,
Sansiwake had to stand on the rocks, the cold water splashing over
his feet. He was held by the arms and legs so that he would not be
able to struggle, and his considerate uncle, Masalito, clapped a hand
over his mouth so that his screams would not bring him disgrace in
the eyes of the villagers. But Sansiwake could not stand the pain; P
perhaps Sabani was drunk and cut badly. Sansiwake bit Masalito and [152]
then screamed his head off, struggling until he almost broke loose.
Two days later, when he was just beginning to recover, it was decided
that he would have to be cut again, as Sabani had not done as he
should. Shortly afterward the weakened and thoroughly dejected boy P [164]
went down with pneumonia, and would have died if the Pygmies had [758]
not broken all the rules of the initiation camp and kept him warm
and well fed.

He was the only one to suffer any ill effects, and his behavior C 881
would have brought him lasting disgrace had he been a villager. The 152
Pygmies, however, showed only consideration and sympathy for San- 577 866
siwake, and criticized the villagers openly for their unnecessary care- P
lessness and brutality. The villagers retorted that Sansiwake's illness 881 152
was only the penalty for his not having behaved himself properly. 866 177

From the moment the boys enter the camp they are meant to stand C
on their own feet without any help from their relatives, but the older [755]
brothers and fathers of the Pygmy boys were constantly comforting C 881
and encouraging them, at the risk of being ridiculed themselves. 866
Masalito, in particular, was not afraid of being sneered at by the vil- P 881
lagers. One boy, Kaoya, who was cut in the camp, was beaten as he 866 177

866 881, made his way painfully to join the other boys, all sitting in a line on
P logs. Immediately after being cut they are made to sit down and join
881 866 the others in singing one of the many work songs they will have to
177 learn during the coming months. This takes their mind off the pain,
P C which is all the more considerable because after the operation the
[533] wound is wrapped in a leaf containing a native medicine that is full
[757] of salt. Kaoya was very roughly handled, and Masalito ran up to him
and put his arms around him, hugging him tight to give him
strength. The villagers howled with laughter, but Masalito was more
concerned with Kaoyo than with them.

C Not long afterward the boys were made to dance, and then put to
881 352 rest on a special bed made of split logs, laid side by side on a rough
346 frame that kept them two feet or so off the ground. The boys lay
513 P face downward along the length of the logs, their heads resting on
881 177 pillows made of plantain leaves. Over the bed there was a rough
shelter, sloping down to the ground behind, but open all along the
C [824] front and on two sides. From the roof was hung a sacred banana,
[778] which initiates and instructors would set swinging as an understood
command for the boys to start singing. The boys were forbidden to
touch the banana, being told they would die if they did.

C There were all sorts of other taboos, or restrictions. To get wet,
881 particularly by being outside when it rained, was sure to bring
P 881 death. To eat certain foods was strictly prohibited. The boys had to
177 eat without using their hands directly, spearing the food with sticks.
C P They were forbidden to eat with their initiated relatives. The sound
[264] of the bull-roarer, a piece of wood that makes a strange whirring
[534] noise when spun around on the end of a cord, was meant to be the
[776] voice of a forest demon, and the boys had to show due respect and
terror when they heard it.

During the daytime, when the villagers were present, either as instructors or just as visitors, the boys adhered faithfully to all these and many other rules. By their own rules, however, the villagers were

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not allowed to sleep in the camp at night. Only the "fathers," that being understood to mean the real fathers and the older brothers of the boys, were allowed to sleep in the "place of the nkumbi." That meant, in this case, only Pygmies. The BaMbuti had different notions. Recognizing that I was anxious to be with them right through the whole period of seclusion, they invited me to join them. After all, they said, I was really the father of all the eight boys. In this way I became one of the *baganza*, the people of the initiation.

The invitation was not intended as a deliberate slight to the villagers; the Pygmies merely thought it would be fun, particularly as they were sure that I would keep them supplied with tobacco and palm wine and other luxuries. From their point of view no harm was being done. From the villagers' point of view, however, this breach of custom was likely to bring disaster not only on me but also on the rest of the baganza. Beyond issuing the gravest warnings, they made no attempt to discourage me and soon came to accept my presence.

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So from the first day to the last I was with the nkumbi, day and night; and at night, when all the villagers had left, I learned what the nkumbi really means to the people of the forest. The moment their instructors were gone, and only Pygmies were left, the boys leaped from the bed where they were supposed to be sleeping and joined their fathers around the fire, eating forbidden foods in forbidden company and in a forbidden manner, using their fingers. One boy jumped onto a log and swung his arms around in imitation of someone swinging a bull-roarer, which of course he should never have seen. Others played their favorite game of punch ball with the sacred bananas. A shower of rain was an invitation to run outside and wash off all the dirt that had accumulated during the day. The villagers not only forbade the candidates to get wet, even by washing, but they smeared them constantly with white clay, from head to foot, as a sign of their death as children. To the naturally clean Pygmies this was intolerable, and the boys were encouraged by their fathers to

P 881 177 take the first opportunity to wash it off. When the villagers questioned them in the morning, the boys invariably replied that they had been so cold during the night that they had huddled close together, and the clay had been rubbed off in this way. In fact, the men provided blankets for the boys, keeping themselves warm by lying close to the fires. Kenge and I slept at one end of the shelter, half underneath the log bed; most of the other adults slept outside.

C 881 563 P 881 177 Both the boys and their fathers enjoyed the chance to make fun, in a friendly way, of the villagers, but that was not their sole reason for deliberately breaking all the taboos. They behaved as they did because to them the restrictions were not only meaningless but belonged to a hostile world. The villagers hoped that the nkumbi would place the Pygmies directly under the supernatural authority of the village tribal ancestors; the Pygmies naturally took good care that nothing of the sort should happen, proving it to themselves by this conscious flaunting of custom.

C 881 769 The villagers believed that the initiate, Pygmy or otherwise, is everlastingly bound thereafter by all the laws of the tribe, sacred and secular. He is put into direct relationship with the supernatural, whose representatives on earth are the villagers themselves. If any Pygmy initiate offends a villager, therefore, he is also offending the supernatural—the ancestors—and will be duly punished by them. C [753] [752] The villagers live in such fear of the supernatural, with its power to bring down on an offender the curses of leprosy, yaws, dysentery and other diseases or to cause him to be injured by a falling tree, that they cannot conceive of any initiate's daring to offend the ancestors. That is why they believe that the nkumbi gives them ultimate control over their ever-troublesome servants who refuse to behave as servants should.

C 881 563 P 881 177 It is not quite so obvious why the Pygmies subject themselves to what they plainly consider an unnecessarily brutal ritual. The trials of the nkumbi candidate only begin with the actual circumcision. Dur-

During the succeeding months—usually two or three now instead of the C 881 563
former six or even twelve—the boys are subjected to one form of 866
mild torture after another. The torture is sometimes mental rather 861
than physical. For instance, one boy, whose father refused point P 881
blank to have anything to do with what he called "an empty, savage 177
custom" but allowed his son to enter, was made to ridicule his father 866
almost every daylight hour. The gentle little Sansiwake, who insisted 861
on getting up from the hard wooden bed to rejoin his companions long before he was completely well, was made to pretend that he was big and strong, carrying heavy loads and imitating the performance of acts degrading to any Pygmy, but particularly so to this sensitive child. Each boy was put through some torture of this nature.

The physical ordeals sometimes start out as games but develop into cruel tests of physical endurance. A crouching dance that might be fun for a few minutes becomes agony after half an hour. A mild switching on the underside of the arm with light sticks is of no concern until, after several days, the skin becomes raw. And then the villagers notch the sticks so that they fold over and pinch the skin sharply, often drawing blood. When the boys have become used to being beaten with leafy branches, thorny bushes are substituted.

To the Pygmies this all seems harsh and unnecessary, and as far as their own children are concerned they keep a strict watch over them to see that the villagers do not go to the length that they sometimes do with village children, even if this brings them into some contempt. But to the villager this toughening-up process is essential and does not come naturally in the course of village life. The child has to be fitted for adult life, and this is what the nkumbi sets out to achieve. In a few months a boy becomes a man, tough and strong, physically and mentally. The process is not a pleasant one, but it is the only way in which, under tribal conditions, the goal can be achieved.

The Pygmy can understand and appreciate this, but the very nature of his own nomadic hunting and gathering existence provides

C 881 563 866 861 P 881 177 866 861 all the toughening up and education that are needed. Children begin climbing trees sometimes before they can walk. Their muscles develop, and they overcome fear in a number of daring tree games. Adult activities are learned from an early age by observation and imitation, for the Pygmies live an open life. Their life is as open inside their tiny one-room leaf huts as it is in the middle of a forest clearing, and so the children have no need of the sex instruction which forms so large a part of the teaching given to village boys during the nkumbi.

P 881 885 177 The Pygmies themselves say that the toughening-up effect of the nkumbi is salutary, though they openly deplore and frequently reject its severity. And when this particular nkumbi was over, the change in every one of the eight boys was plain to see. But this is not their major reason for allowing themselves to be subjected to village initiation, nor is there any question of their being subjected by force. They enter the nkumbi voluntarily because they are a proud people. They live necessarily in contact with the villagers and spend a number of weeks every year either in a village or among villagers. The latter regard any adult who is not initiated as a child; he is treated with no more respect, accorded no more privileges, and he cannot take part in any adult activities. By entering the nkumbi the Pygmies prove their adulthood to the villagers the only way they can. When the initiation was over even Sansiwake had the right to enter any adult baraza and take part in the proceedings. This is what the Pygmies want from the nkumbi, and what they get—the status of adults in village eyes.

P 881 882 177 There are many things in their behavior to show that the nkumbi means no more than this to them, quite apart from their deliberate lack of respect for the laws of the nkumbi and their irreverence toward everything that is sacred to the villager. When this particular nkumbi was over and everyone returned to the forest, the same boys who had been walking freely among the men of the village, as men, went straight back to their mothers. They became children once more and were accorded none of the privileges of the adult forest Pygmy. Above all, they were not allowed to take part in the singing of the men's molimo songs. They may have become adults in the village, but in the forest they were still children. P 881 882 177

Far from illustrating the dependence of the Pygmies upon the villagers, the nkumbi illustrates better than anything else the complete opposition of the forest to the village. The Pygmies in the forest consciously and energetically reject all village values. When they are in the village they temporarily adopt its values and customs, not wanting to desecrate their sacred forest values by bringing them into the village. That is why they never sing their sacred songs in the village the way they do in the forest, and why they refuse to consecrate the nkumbi with special music, although every other event of importance in their lives is marked in this way. There is an unbridgeable gulf between the two worlds of the two peoples. C 563 P 177

The Pygmies have their own way of growing naturally into adulthood. A boy proves himself capable of supporting a family when he kills his first real game, and proves himself a man when he participates in the elima. P 881 885

During the whole nkumbi there was only one Pygmy who showed the slightest fear of the consequences of the blatant disregard everyone else showed for the laws of the villagers. That was Aberi, father of Sansiwake—Aberi the ugly, Aberi who was so often the laughing-stock of his fellows. It was not that he was afraid of the villagers as people, for after his son's illness he often used to walk right among the instructors and drag his Sansiwake away if he felt they were being too severe with him. And he was as outspoken as any against any mistreatment of the children by the villagers. He particularly criticized Sabani for causing his son's illness. Sabani and the other instructors told Aberi it was a terrible thing to do to criticize the nkumbi doctor. C 563 P 156 177

Not long afterward Aberi became ill. He was so ill that he could 000

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ever, a one-way process; no Negress could endure the pygmy way of living, and none of them ever marry pygmies.

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The interplay between Negroes and pygmies may be illustrated by a number of examples in which they disagree on historical facts. The Negroes say that the pygmies once went naked, like animals. The pygmies hotly deny this, and assert that they always wore loin cloths. The Negroes admit that they themselves were once cannibals, but say that the pygmies ate more human flesh than they did. This too the pygmies deny; they claim that they never ate human flesh except when the Negroes gave it to them.

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In addition to the exchange of food and, formerly, protection, which form the basis for Negro-pygmy interaction, there is another activity which helps to cement their relationship. The Negroes have a circumcision school, of the usual Negro variety. This school is held about once in four or five years. There is no specific interval; it is probable that they wait until there are enough boys ready to form a class of the right size. These boys are anywhere from nine to fourteen years of age. Now the pygmies associated with these Negroes may send their boys through this same school with the sons of their hosts. Thus, the pygmy boys are away from home several months, are in close association with the Negro boys, and are taught the same secrets that the Negro boys learn. At the end they are all circumcised together, and their parents come to the Negro village to dance and get drunk with the parents of the Negro boys.

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The pygmies are thus age-graded like the Negroes. Each class has its own cheer, or song, as in American colleges. Each class also has its own name, such as "Hurricane" or "great army worm," depending on some event

[P. 325-A]

855 597 There is a great deal of swapping children, fostering, and adoption. This takes place especially between sisters and between women who are friendly and work together. [768] When a woman dies, her sister will normally take over her children, keeping the girls until they are ready for marriage. The boys join their father when they are old enough to hunt.

• 881 Among the pygmies living in my immediate neighborhood, there is no separate pygmy initiation ceremony. Girls are not publicly initiated at all, and as mentioned above, the boys go through the Negro bush school with the sons of their patrons. (See Negro-pygmy relations; p. 325.)

585 A marriage within the camp creates no disturbance in the relations of the group as a whole, and little between the individuals in particular, but an intercamp marriage does produce crises in the lives of those close to the principals, as well as of the principals themselves, for such a marriage requires ceremony.

585 628 Schebesta[8] describes one of the latter, in which the two groups of kin, complete with brides but not with grooms, met in the forest away from either camp. They set up their huts near each other, but in separate bivouacs, and feasted and danced *separately* for three days. Then the two groups came together and the elder men of each group brought the two brides face to face and gave them advice—to keep the camp full of food, to be polite and friendly, to be particularly thoughtful of old people and children, to live in peace and bear many offspring. After this excellent advice, each girl was led by the kinfolk of her new husband to the camp in which she was to live, and there she joined her new husband. She brought along with her a few girls of her own group to ease the strain of so

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[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 134–135.

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